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BY

WISH WYNNE

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TO BILL AND BERNARD

FOREWORD

Most of these little monologues you will probably have heard already while listening-in. The stories are unpretentious little fragments, impressions and conversations of people I have come across in my travels.

They are all absolutely true.

W. W.

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OOH ! ER !

'ERE !
I don't 'arf get the blooming' hump with
some folks that's a fact,
The way they treat a skivvy it's a crime.
You talk about hard labour, why, it isn't in
it straight
With some situations I've had in me time.
Now Mrs. Smevick Brown of Pimblico, she
was a peach,
She very nearly drove me up the pole.
If it had'n'a been for master I'd 'a left before
I did,
But the guvenor oh ! he was a dear old soul.

But 'Er ! OOH ! 'Er ! She took the bloomin'
biscuit if yer like,
If she saw the guvenor talking like he some-
times used to do
Lor! the way that woman used to get the spike.
If I forgot the dinner or forgot to wash my
face,
Or smashed a cup or two she'd make a stir;
I didn't mind the master or the children or
the neighbours,
But 'Er ! - - - OOH ! 'Er !

And then there was another one—Miss Baxter
was her name,
And wasn't she a finnicky old fad.
Why if she found a few hairs in the soup
she'd make a fuss,
Her particklarness, it nearly drove yer mad.
And the tempers she'd get into for the
simplelest of things
Couldn't bear to see me trying on her 'at.
I thought that she'd 'a struck me once, and
only 'cause I dropped
The hot flat iron upon the Persian cat.

'Er! Ooh! 'Er! When me month was up I
tell yer I was glad,
Coming round and writing dust on the pianer
with her fingers
Was a pleasant little habit that she had.
Well, her face 'ud tell yer what she was—oh!
she had got a face,
Well 'twas not a face at all, it was a blur.
I've seen some very funny looking fizzogs in
in me time,
But 'Er! - - - - Ooh! 'Er!

And then old mother Willis was the limit,
straight she was
Oh! I ad' a life the month that I was there.

Of all the sanctimonious old cats she was the worst
And sanctimonious ones I can't abear.
One 'oliday my bloke and me we'd been out for the day,
And my time for getting back was nine, yer see
Well I dunno' how it 'appened but we missed the bloomin' train
And I didn't reach the house till nearly three.

When I say I dunno' 'ow it 'appened I do know 'ow it 'appened. Bill and me we 'ad a row. I can do with Bill but oh! he's so bloomin' jealous—and that night he says to me, he says, "Liza, did yer ever love another bloke before yer met me?" Well I wasn't going to tell him no. I don't believe in letting 'em think you've been waiting for 'em. "Well I dunno' Bill," I says, "I've walked out with one or two you know and"—"Liza," he says, "you're 'iding something from me." I says, "Of course I am, I ain't a bloomin' Salome am I?" Then he got nasty. There we stood in the street arguing, started off to miss the last train and did it very successful and I got home at past two o'clock.

Then 'Er! Ooh! 'Er! Of course I knew that
there would be a row.
The way that woman raved and stamped and
tore about the place,
Was a thing I didn't bargain for somehow.
Yer see what seemed to worry 'er, I'd got 'er
sables on,
And when she spotted 'em, she said, "Is that
my fur?"
Just as though I'd done 'er mingey bit of
rabbit skin some 'arm,
Oh 'Er! - - - Ooh! 'Er!

" SUPERSPICION "

Mrs. Judd was a charwoman from choice, not necessity. She said she couldn't bear to be beholden to her husband for every penny she wanted. Besides which she said it was a very interesting profession, but not what it used to be.

Just now she was engaged in scrubbing out some new houses, cleaning up after the plasterers, painters and paper-hangers.

This morning she came out of one of the houses with a scrubbing brush and house-flannel in one hand, and a bucket of dirty water in the other, and she was walking with her legs crossed. She looked so funny that the painter who was on a ladder over the door burst out laughing.

" 'Ullo ! Ma ! " he said, " what's the matter ? You're all of a twist."

" Yes, young man," said Mrs. Judd, " you may laugh, but p'r'aps you're not ' superspicious.' I am ! And every time I come out to empty my bucket, I have to come under that ladder, and as me 'ands is generally full, I can't cross me fingers, so I cross me legs instead and 'opes for the best."

At that the painter laughed so much that he nearly fell off the ladder.

"Aw! go on you may giggle," went on Mrs. Judd, "I know what I'm talking about, and there's more in 'superspicion' than you would think."

"Look at yesterday. I knocked over the salt-cellar while I was 'aving my breakfast, and I said to my son Arnold, I said, 'mark my words, something 'll 'appen before the day is out.' And sure enough it did. I met with a' accident."

"It was this way."

"I wanted to go to Putney to see my married daughter. She's just 'ad another yer know. So my son said 'e'd run me down in 'is side-car. 'Is girl is away on 'er 'olidays, otherwise I could 'ave walked for all 'e'd 'ave cared."

"Well, we stopped at the Red Lion going down because Arnold said 'e wanted some water for 'is lamp. Of course we stopped at some others as well, but I remember the Red Lion special because it was there that I met with my accident."

"We pulls up in front of the pub, and Arnold asks me what I am going to 'ave. I says a drop of gin. So 'e goes in an' presently 'e comes back with a pint of burton for 'isself,

a glass of water for the lamp and my drop a gin. And it was a drop ! I could 'ave put it in my eye. Arnold took it back an' got me a double."

" Well, I sat there sipping me gin and Arnold was messing about with the lamp. 'E couldn't unscrew it, so 'e gives me the glass to 'old while 'e does it, and then 'e takes the water, pours it in and screws it up again, drinks up 'is beer, then turns to me. ' Are you fit ? ' 'e says. So I drinks up me gin. And believe me or believe me not, 'e put my gin in the lamp, and I drank the water."

" Aw ! it did give me a turn ! I come all over faint. Arnold had to get me another gin to put a bit of life in me."

" I tell you young man there's more in ' superspicion ' than you think, as you'll know when yer older."

Just then one of the carpenters came up.

" Hullo ! Ma," he said, " trying to vamp my mate ? "

" No I am not vamping 'im, whatever that may mean. I was just telling 'im a story."

" Oh ! " broke in the carpenter, " 'ave yer 'eard this one ? "

" Don't tell me anything that ain't respect-

able, young man. I likes a bit of fun as well as anybody, but let it stop at that I say."

"Aw! I wouldn't shock yer modesty for worlds. No Ma! this one is all right. Struck me as being very funny."

"We've got a school teacher lodging at our 'ouse, and 'im and me was yarning last night. 'E was telling me the funny things kids say. 'E said yesterday one little boy was late and 'e said to 'im: 'Why are you late Cyril?' And the youngster said, 'Please Sir, I 'ad to go and get my mother's liver because she's 'ad to take 'er leg to the 'ospital.'"

Mrs. Judd laughed. "That's good," she said, "that's very good."

"My daughter made me laugh last night, as we were sitting having supper. She always stops with me when 'er boat's in. She's a stewardess you know, and she was telling me that on 'er last trip, there was a young fellow and a girl on the boat who got very sweet on each other. They never left each other's side 'ardly."

"The girl was married too which made it all the funnier."

"Well, my daughter says that one evening, about a couple of days before the boat got in, she was taking a rug to one of 'er ladies, who

was sitting on the sheltered side of the boat."

" After she tucked 'er lady up, she walked round the windy side to get a bit of a blow—they don't get much fresh air, don't stewardesses—so she took advantage of it, particularly as there didn't seem to be anybody on that side. She walked along and presently she spied the spoony couple in a' alcove."

" They were reclining each on a deck chair, but their heads was close together, and resting on one cushion. They was muffled up to the eyes in rugs, only the tops of their heads was visible. They was 'aving a kiss an' a cuddle on the quiet. But what amused my daughter so, was the cushion they was resting their 'eads on. It was one of them with motters on it. My daughter couldn't see the couple, but she could read the motter on the cushion, and it was: '*Honi swor ky mally ponce !*' "

O KOYO SAN

LITTLE O Koyo San was a water baby. She was born in the month of the rains. It was twelve moons since she awakened. Tiny and delicate she was, with her round mat of hair, her rosy brown skin, and her mouth like a cherry. A world of wisdom lay in her black almond eyes, and she was always smiling an odd, sad little smile.

The small village in which she lived, with its straggling line of wood and paper houses, its tremulous blue bean fields, its plum and cherry trees, its temple and buddha in the pine grove, and all that went to make up its fascinating loveliness, she viewed from her perch on the back of her sister, O Saki San—O Saki San who grumbled always at her frail burden. Little O Koyo San never cried like the other babies, not even when, at the evening meal, the rice gave out before the ravenous onslaught of her six brothers and sisters, and she, forgotten, went hungry.

An elfin thing was she, who laughed at the moon and danced to the music of the rain. And when her sister, O Saki San, went down

to the seashore to buy fish from the fishermen as they brought in their nets, O Koyo San would clap her hands at the waves and gurgle with delight at the drenching spray.

Sometimes, when at the door of the weather-stained cottage, with its soft thatched roof on which green lilies grew, O Saki San would stand and gossip in the moonlight, with O Koyo San swinging on her back, O Koyo San would sit as still as a mouse, her little head on one side, gazing up at the white moon.

O Koyo San was a water baby.

It was autumn. The brown leaves lay thick on the ground, and rain burdened the branches of the trees. Inside the cottage, O Koyo San's mother served stew for supper; but O Koyo San, clinging to her sister's back, sat quiet, thoughtful, and forgotten.

Presently her mother addressed O Saki San, saying:

"Go quickly to the well, and fetch water."

O Saki San scowled, took a pitcher, and, with O Koyo San still on her back, went out into the night.

The mist was racing along the flats, the clouds were flying across the moon. The child lifted up her face and laughed aloud. O Saki San shook her. O Saki San was peevish

and cross. Like a cat, she hated the dampness. She shuffled along to the well, which stood in the shadow of a great cedar, and let down the bucket. She drew it up clumsily and jerkily. Just before it reached the top it caught in the ropes. O Saki San leaned far over to disentangle it. At that moment the moon peered out from behind a cloud and looked right into the well.

O Koyo San, over her sister's shoulder, saw its white reflection. She and the moon looked into the well together. As she looked, O Koyo San's eyes seemed to light up with a gleam of memory, and with a spring and a joyous laugh, she slipped over O Saki San's shoulder, down—down—down.

The reflection of the moon reeled and shivered, as her small body met the water.

O Saki San gave a shrill scream, and scurried away.

Then all was still.

The weeping mists swept down the valley, shrouding the rice-fields, the sea moaned in the distance, the wind in the bamboo sighed softly and sadly, the moon, like a white ghost, fled behind the clouds, and the rain dripped from the cedar boughs, like black tears.

Little O Koyo San was a water baby.

"EH! DEAR I 'DUNNO"

I'M in love with a boy what works on our farm,
He's madly in love with me too,
He came down to help us last harvestin' time,
Then Dad kept him the whole Winter through.
I'm sure I don't know how it all came about,
Us two—falling in love I mean,
One day he looked at me, and I looked at him,
And it seemed that it always had been.
Mother says that I'm awfully foolish,
And she thinks that I must be off my head,
When I've got a good home, and plenty to eat,
At my age—to want to get wed.
I can't understand myself neither,
I never did used to feel so,
But if I hear his footsteps, I tremble all over,
Eh dear, I 'dunno.

My father and mother know better than me,
I suppose I should heed what they say,
But Charlie's so different from all other men,
I told mother so yesterday.
Says she, ah! your sisters all told the same tale,
But I can't see what difference there be,
There's Jane wi' her seven, and Mary wi' four,
And Elizabeth Anne she's got three.

So they grumble and argue and pester,
I'm spoiling my life they declare,
Aunt Sue's had three husbands, so she ought to know,
Says, marriage itself is a snare.
I made up my mind when I met him—
Last night, that I'd tell him to go,
But he put his arm round me, and then I forgot,
Eh dear, I 'dunno.

Grandma says, what I see in him—licks her to death,
Father swears when I mention his name,
Sister Jane laughs, and says he's got knocker knees,
Well, if he has, he's not to blame.
He certainly isn't a good-looking lad,
His hair is as red as can be,
And freckles, his face is just covered wi' 'em,
But—I've seen lads as ugly as he.
Sometimes I think I wont wed him,
I'll do what my mother thinks best,
I'll tell him that father thinks he is too poor,
And that they wont agree and—the rest.
But when he starts talking so loving,
And holds me and wont let me go,
I feel—oh, I feel—well ye know how ye feel,
Eh dear, I 'dunno.

THAT BREATHING FEELING

JULIA BROWN had got that breathing feeling again. She always did get it when anybody or anything upset her. It was an awful feeling, she said, like trying to get your breath and not being able to. She was perfectly certain that there would come a time when she wouldn't be able to get her breath at all, and that would be the end of her. To-day it was the thunder that had upset her, and being of a melancholy nature she was particularly down in the dumps when her sister Gladys called, more to shelter from the storm than to see Julia. The sisters had little in commom. Gladys being of a lively disposition, Julia got on her nerves.

"What an awful storm," said Julia in her dull monotonous voice. "Oh! did you want to do your 'air? I've covered the looking glass over. I always do when it lightnings—and the machine. Wasn't that an awful clap of thunder just before you came in?" she continued, "it shook the 'ole 'ouse and has given me that breathing feeling again. I can't stand the noise of thunder. It frightens me."

"Well, that's funny," said Gladys, "I

always thought you liked noise. Anyway you hate to be alone. You like people always around you, and you love street noises—'buses, trams, and motors. I've heard you say so often. What's the thunder done wrong?"

"Oh! I don't mind natural noises like traffic," said Julia, "it's unnatural noises like thunder I don't like."

Gladys laughed. "Has Jim got any work yet?" she said.

"No," replied Julia, "'e's gone to see about a job this afternoon. Isn't it dreadful? Not a stroke 'as 'e done these last three months. I dunno what's going to become of us—I 'aven't a penny in the 'ouse."

"You look pretty well on it," said her sister. "I believe you are fatter every time I see you."

"Well, what can I do?" returned Julia. "Only this morning I was looking in the glass and thinking what a miserable life mine is. Not a bit of anything to eat in the 'ouse and no money. Not even a penny to get Epsom Salts to get thin with."

"Well, I haven't much, but you are welcome to a couple of bob, if that's any use to you," said Gladys.

"Thanks! I'll pay you back when Jim gets some work."

"Sorry to hear of Jim's father's death," remarked Gladys, "I thought the old boy was good for another ten years at least."

"Is he dead?" droned Julia. "I didn't know. I'm not friends with Jim's people, you see. I 'aven't been inside their 'ouse for over a twelve month. Jim goes but 'e never tells me anything. Now I come to think of it 'e was round there last night and come back looking very down in the mouth. I didn't say anything to 'im because we'd 'ad a bit of a row and weren't speaking. But I remember 'im saying to 'imself 'too late! too late!' I thought 'e meant the pub."

Gladys laughed. "Got a woodbine by any chance," she asked.

"No," replied Julia, "I've given up smoking woodbines."

"Why?"

"Because I 'aven't the money to buy them with," said Julia.

"Well, it's clearing up now," said Gladys, putting on her raincoat, "so I'll be getting along. Why don't you pop in and see us some time? I thought you might come last Sunday."

"We went out fishing last Sunday," said Julia.

"Fishing!" echoed Gladys.

"Yes; one of Jim's pals asked 'im to go for company. 'E said 'e'd pay fares and bring some beer. 'E knows Jim's out of work. So I thought I'd go too. Anything for a change."

"Was it nice?" asked Gladys.

"Oh! I dunno," said Julia. "The weather was dull and I'd got that breathing feeling again, and Jim wouldn't talk, just sat there fishing."

"Did he catch anything?" asked Gladys.

"Yes," replied Julia, "'e caught one or two, but there was nothing for me to do at all. And then they got me to 'old the line while they went off somewhere. And there was I under a dark pier and not a soul near. And you know 'ow green and slimy and gloomy it is down there—and quiet. Not a sound but the water lapping against the wood. I got so nervous. And then that breathing feeling came on. And presently I 'eard a funny flapping noise. When I looked down there were those poor little fish gasping for breath too. Well, it's a wonder I didn't drop the rod, but I didn't. I pushed them along with my foot right to the edge, and they went plonk into the water and swam away. Jim and his pal didn't arf go off the deep end about it when they came back. But I didn't care, poor little

things. No one knows what that breathing feeling's like only them that has it."

"Well, cheer up, you'll soon be dead," laughed Gladys, as she made for the door.

"Ah, it's all very well for you. But if you 'ad that breathing . . . . " but Gladys was half-way down the street.

POSH

" FUNNY Gladys 'asn't been," said Julia to her husband as he sat reading the evening paper. " I wrote and told 'er the new address, and she must 'ave got the letter. I wrote it on Saturday morning and 'ere it is Friday, and she 'asn't turned up. Funny lot they are. Here's their own sister living just a stone's throw, as you might say, and they never comes near, and I did want 'er to see the new furniture. It do look nice, don't it Jim ? I think I shall get a curtain for behind the door, and one or two more cushions when I can afford it. Don't drop your ash on the carpet. I'm always 'aving to sweep it up, and bending gives me that breathing feeling.

" I think we got these rooms very cheap, don't you Jim ? Two rooms for seven shillings a week. I told you she wanted ten, didn't I ? But I beat 'er down to seven. Even then she wanted bankers' references and solicitors' names. What did she want them for, Jim ? We don't 'ave anything to do with solicitors. We ain't done nothing."

Jim looked up from his paper. "What's that," he said.

"Oh! you do make me wild," went on Julia in her usual dull monotonous way. "'Ere am I on me own all day without a soul to talk to, and then when you do come 'ome, you sit there like a dummy reading and never opens yer mouth."

Jim was on the point of replying but Julia went on. "Most superior woman this landlady is. Quite a lady. She's never let before. I 'ope you won't go carrying any paper parcels in and out. I am sure she wouldn't like it, she's so superior."

At that moment there were two loud knocks at the street door. Julia looked blankly at her husband.

"That's for us, Jim," she said. "I wonder if it's Gladdie. I shall tell 'er off if it is. Knocking at the door like that. It's enough to shake the 'ouse down. I'm sure this landlady won't like it. Go and open the door, Jim."

It was the lively Gladys.

"How are you, Jim," she said in her boisterous way, "and how on earth did you find this place? I've had an awful job to find it. How's Julia?"

At that moment Julia came into the passage. "Come inside," she said scowling, "and don't make such a noise."

Inside the room Julia said: "Shsshss! Hush! Don't talk so loud, Gladdie, your voice can be 'eard all over the 'ouse. These are very superior rooms. The landlady is quite a lady. She won't like it. Why didn't you wear your other coat? I wish the landlady 'adn't seen you in that one. Never mind, p'r'aps she's out and didn't see you. I'll fill the kettle. We'll have some tea."

Julia took the kettle and went out.

"What's all this superior business?" asked Gladys of Jim.

"Ask me another?" replied Jim. "She's gone all posh since we've been in these rooms. Couldn't even get her to come and have a glass of stout with me last night. She said she wouldn't like the landlady to know she went in 'pubs'."

"Well, it's some room you've got," said Gladys. "Did Julia make those cushions? Yes? Wonderful!"

Here Julia re-entered with the kettle.

"The landlady did see you," she said, "but I told 'er you'd come about some dress-making.

I thought, with that old coat on, I'd better not tell 'er you were me sister."

" Well, I like that," flashed Gladys.

But Julia went stolidly on not heeding the interruption.

" What do you think of the place, Gladdie ? Nice, ain't it ? I made these cushions meself and we picked up these chairs for " (in a whisper) " five bob each second 'and. Ain't the room lovely ? With that tree in the yard you'd think you were in the country. And the birds. They sing lovely 'ere, much nicer than they do at your place. And the landlady ! She is such a superior woman. Always 'as a serviette, even when she's 'aving dinner all by 'erself."

" 'Ow's mother's chest ? Is it better, and when is she coming to see me ? Nice lot you are ! I've been expecting you all the week. I've 'ad a nice tea ready every day, ain't I Jim ? I made a jam sponge and a tart and some little cakes. Jim's eaten them nearly all though. Why didn't you come sooner ? "

" Well," answered Gladys, " I've spent about three hours trying to find you now. You put the wrong address on your letter. You put 16, Kilcott Road, Clapham Common. So I took a 'bus to " The Plough " and walked

and walked till I felt fit to drop. I kept all on asking people, but nobody knew. At last I asked a postman and he said, 'There's no Kilcott Road, Clapham Common, Miss. It's Clapham Junction you want.' So I toiled all the way down here and I am dog tired. Didn't you know it was Clapham Junction and not Clapham Common when you wrote to me?"

"Yes," replied Julia, "I knew it was Clapham Junction, but Clapham Common looks so much more superior."

I DON'T CARE

D'you know a girl called Elsie Evelyn Martin ?
She lives next door to us, it is a shame ;
She's always telling stories to me mother about me,
Whatever's wrong, I always get the blame.
I pinched an apple off the stall this morning,
She wanted me to pinch another one.
And then, because I wouldn't, when we came home from school,
She went and told me mother what I'd done.

I don't care, tell-tale tits I can't abear :
Now me mother's rowing, and has punched me on the head,
And to-night's me Bible class, and now I'm not to go, she said.
And I've learnt me chapter of St. John, and learnt me hym and learnt me prayer,
And there's a lovely shop just near the church where you can pinch 'em fine,
Still I've got one left, so I don't care.

My mother's very friendly with her mother,
They're always gossipping together now,

If me father knew she went in there so often
as she does
He wouldn't half kick up a bloomin' row.
It wouldn't take me very long to tell him,
She ain't half made me arm feel sore :
I bet there's bruises on it, I do think it's a
shame,
To thrash me through that cat next door.

I don't care, and there's me mother stuck in
there,
Says I was to wash the pots, and get me father's
tea :
It's like her to go gossipping, and leave it all
to me.
There's me father coming now, and the tea's
not ready—won't he swear ?
" Father ! Mother's gossipping in Martin's, and
she's been there all the day."
I'll cop out now—but I don't care.

Last Saturday, I got a awful hidin',
All through that ugly cat that lives next door ;
Because I wouldn't let her have me skipping
rope to lend,
She went and told me mother that I swore.
I don't swear half nor quarter's much as she
does.

I DON'T CARE

She says some awful wicked things she do ;
When yesterday, young Billy Smith, he kicked
her on the shin,
You ought to heard the language she got
through.

I don't care, the lies, I don't know how she
dare ;
To-day she tore me pinny, when we were play-
ing touch,
And then she made me fall when we were skipp-
ing double Dutch,
Won't I pay her out you see, and if I want to
to swear—I'll swear.
She's an artful cat, I hate her ! and I hate me
mother too !
Devil—Damn—there—and I don't care !

A COCKEREL TALE

Tom Barton was intoxicated. There was not the slightest doubt about it. He had already thrown most of the contents of his one and only room out of the window, and now stood gesticulating wildly at the crowd. Chairs, pictures and crockery were lying about on the pavement, most of them smashed to atoms.

Mrs. Barton, his wife, both eyes in mourning, sat sobbing on the bed. The bed and a chest-of-drawers were about the only articles of furniture left in the room. And doubtless they would have been on the pavement too, but for the fact they were awkward to handle.

Mrs. Dix, who lived in the room above Tom Barton, was very annoyed about it all. And she said it was only natural that anybody would want to have a 'bosso' out of the window occasionally, and a listen-in at the top of the stairs while the excitement was on. So that if the row continued and she was interrupted like this much longer, she would never get the jumper done. And Mrs. Sims wanted it 'particilar' that evening. "Besides," said Mrs. Dix, "I've never heard such language

in all her life. I can swear a bit myself," said she, " but there are limits."

So Mrs. Dix went downstairs to see about it. She knocked at the Barton's door but there was too much noise going on inside for her to be heard. So she pushed it open and walked right in.

Mrs. Dix says she believes to this day that going in at that moment as she did saved Mrs. Barton's life. For when she entered, the first thing she saw was Tom Barton standing over his wife with a knife in his hand threatening to cut her throat. Directly he saw Mrs. Dix, she says he let go his hold on his wife and threw the knife into the fire-place, put on his cap and stumbled down the stairs out into the court.

Mrs. Dix helped Mrs. Barton to her feet, bathed her eyes and made a cup of tea.

" Why do you live with him, dearie ? " she said. " I'd 'ave the law on 'im, if it was me."

" Oh ! I daresn't," replied the wife, " 'e'd do me in if I did."

" Well it's my belief he'll do yer in anyway if you stop with 'im," said Mrs. Dix. " Why, 'e'd a done yer in this afternoon if I 'adn't a come in."

" Oh ! I don't think he meant it," sobbed Mrs. Barton. " He was only doing it to

frighten me. 'E's very good 'earted when 'e's sober. Brought me a bottle of stout 'ome last night 'e did. 'E's orlright when 'e likes."

"Yes!" said Mrs. Dix, "but 'e don't often like. Well, I must get away or I'll never 'ave that jumper finished."

And she hurried upstairs to her sewing.

Well, of course, with all that time wasted she had to work late that night to get the jumper done, and it was long past midnight when she blew out the lamp and got into bed.

And just afterwards she heard Tom Barton come stumbling up the stairs. Then she heard him in the room below swearing and mumbling his threats to cut his wife's throat. Mrs. Dix says it made her feel quite creepy because he said it so often. She expected every minute to hear a scream and sounds of a struggle.

At last she fell asleep.

It was just breaking day when she wakened with a start. She thought she heard someone call. She listened and then she heard a sound, a horrible sound—a choking gurgle, a long drawn sigh, and then silence. Mrs. Dix says her blood ran cold and her hair seemed to stand on end. And her first thought was that Tom Barton had done it. Unable to bear the suspense, she slipped on her raincoat and went

downstairs as fast as her trembling limbs would permit. She was just on the point of turning the handle of the Barton's door when she heard it again—the horrible choking—the gasping sigh.

But this time it ended with a crow, weak but unmistakably a crow.

And then it dawned on Mrs. Dix.

Mrs. Easy's young cockerel had succeeded!

KUNG LEE AND THE FISH

KUNG-LEE was the sole support of his aged and honourable parents. Kung-Lee was very poor. Also he was very much in love. She was a little Chinese lady whose name meant something lovely, like Golden-bells, Lotus flowers, or Autumn winds, and she was as lovely as her name.

Kung-Lee's master sold fish in the market place at Hong Kong. It was Kung-Lee's job to go down to the quay when the river steamers came in and bring up the fish alive. No one will buy dead fish.

So it was the custom of the masters to give extra money to the boy who was first into the market with the live fish.

Kung-Lee wanted money badly. Something there was he wanted to buy for the little lady with the lovely name, and much money was needed to procure it. That was why Kung-Lee was always in a great hurry when the steamers came in.

The fish are caught in the river by Canton. They are caught in nets and transferred alive to big vats in the river steamers plying between

Canton and Hong Kong. These vats are eight large round wooden tanks about eight feet in diameter and about six feet deep. They are on the lower deck of the steamer, four on either side. Both night and day during the journey down a coolie sits between each pair of vats, with a large wooden dipper in his hand and in front of him a box-like vessel about a foot square. On either side of the box-like vessel is a trough made from a large split bamboo. This trough runs into the vats on either side, and it is the coolie's work to keep taking a dipper of water from each tank alternately and pour it into the box-like vessel from whence it runs into the troughs and so back into the vats.

It sounds a bit Heath Robinsonish, but it is really quite simple and effective. The idea is to oxygenate the water.

As the steamer comes alongside at Hong Kong the plugs are pulled out of the vats, and the water is allowed to flow away. The men hop over into the vats and secure the live fish, with which the waiting coolies will fill their baskets.

As the boat glides slowly in there is great excitement among the coolies gathered on the docks. Directly the gang plank is thrown

down there is one mad rush. Sometimes one or two coolies go by the board, a dangerous happening, as they are liable to be crushed between the steamer and the jetty.

The coolies carry the fish in big baskets slung in the centre of a bamboo pole carried by a coolie at either end.

On this particular day Kung-Lee and his partner were two of the first to force their way on to the boat. They got their fish and tried to rush their way back, but it was rough going. For the in-coming crowd met the out-going crowd. On the gang plank they fought tooth and nail to get along. In the mêlée the basket was jolted and one fish—a beauty about two feet long and ten pounds in weight—slid into the water. It was salt water in the harbour and it was a fresh-water fish. So it floated, still struggling on the surface of the water.

Kung-Lee left his partner with the pole and basket, and went like lightening hand over hand down the slimy piles of the jetty, until he came to the water. Like a monkey he climbed, dodging the cross beams, darting here and there, as the wash from the slowly revolving paddles carried the struggling fish all ways and any way. At last Kung-Lee, hanging on to a beam and leaning far out,

grabbed it. The fish struggled madly, and Kung-Lee, who dare not let go his hold of the beam, began to wonder how he was going to get back. He worked the fighting fish up under his arm. That wouldn't do. He tried to stuff it into the top of his trousers, but it was no go.

It was a regular " Tunney " of a fish although it was not a Tunny-fish.

At last Kung-Lee gave it up. He realised he could not get his prize up on to the jetty alive. He must kill it—but how? There was only one way. Kung-Lee bent his head and fixed his teeth into the gill-slits. With his hand now freed, he caught its body half way down, bent it back on itself, and with a quick jerk, broke its neck. It's blood came gushing all over Kung-Lee's face.

Having killed it, Kung-Lee began his perilous climb back, with the fish firmly held in his teeth.

He was late to market that day and his master said many harsh things. But "Maskee!" There will be more steamers coming into Hong Kong harbour.

Yet how sad it is that the little lady of the lovely name must wait for the something Kung-Lee aches to buy her.

HE DIDN'T SEE

CHARLIE BROWN our farmer's son is mad in love with me,
He never would have told me so because he's shy you see.
I knew I'd have to help him out and so when yesterday
Us two we went a marketing I started right away.

Weather's looking nice says I,
Aye! Weather's looking nice says Charlie,
I wonder will it rain says I.
Aye! Like as not me maid says Charlie.
I sidled to his side and said,
You be a real nice boy you be,
I like blue eyes like you've got,
And the way your hair all crinkles,
But Charlie didn't seem to see.

I tried hard so awful hard to make him understand.
I nudged him and I giggled and once I squeezed his hand.

And when I squeezed his hand see here his
face it all went red.
I said, your blushing Charlie Brown. Well,
weather's hot he said.

Our Jane is courting now says I,
Courting is she, eh, says Charlie.
I saw 'em both last night says I,
They were coming through yon field of barley.
He'd got his arm right round her waist,
She looked as happy as could be,
I wonder if I had a arm round me,
Would I look happy?
But Charlie didn't seem to see.

Coming home that night I nearly gave it up
for good,
He never made no sign, he were just like a
lump of wood.
It made me feel so shamed some way to see
him sitting there,
And me a making love, and him not seeming
for to care.

Did you ever kiss a girl, says I?
Never in me life says Charlie.
It's awful dark just here says I.
Aye! It's awful dark says Charlie.

'ERE!

Fancy, never kissed a girl says I,
You be a funny boy you be;
But if you like, that is, I mean,
Well if you want I'll let you.
But Charlie didn't seem to see.

'OLD BONES'

It was a large tip or muck heap at the side of the canal. Half the refuse of London and most of its deceased cats and dogs seemed to be dumped there.

It was the home of thousands of rats. It was also the home of "Old Bones," a half-wit —an inoffensive, queer little man, fair of complexion, short of stature and very very thin.

He wore many sheets of newspaper next his skin, a pair of ragged pants, an old jacket, a pair of old boots full of holes and tied on with string, and several brass rings on the fingers of either hand. These, with a battered hat completed his make-up.

He lived in the muck and rubbish of the tip. He had built for himself a sort of dug-out, into which he crawled, and he shared the crusts he found on the tip with the rats, because he said, "If he didn't feed them, they would make a feed of him."

If you were not looking for it you would pass the dug-out a thousand times and never see "Bones," for it was cunningly planned. But if you searched hard you might find it, and

if you looked in you could just discern him squatting in the dark, his mild blue eyes peering out at you. Frightened eyes they would be, for " Bones " had a great horror of the workhouse, where he had heard people say he ought to be.

He hardly ever slept, except in fitful dozes, for the rats made a fire all night imperative. There were times when you couldn't see " Old Bones " for smoke. The dug-out would be full of it. When it got too bad he would crawl out into the open, coughing and choking —his eyes inflamed and running, and say, " I can't think what's the matter with my eyes. They are bad."

His chief source of income was from the bones he found on the tip, and these he would sort out and sell to the local soap and manure factory for a few coppers. He was known to all the men there, and he was always the butt of their practical jokes.

He was down at the factory one day, selling his bones. It was winter and " Bones " himself was hungry; the tip hadn't yielded much in the way of food lately, so he asked one of the men if they had a bit of " rough stuff " knocking about. They fished him a bit out of the boiler and gave it him. A big piece of

fat meat it was, so scalding hot that it burnt the old man's hands; he kept blowing on it in an endeavour to cool it.

Just then one of the men shouted, "stow it, here comes the foreman." Quickly "Old Bones" slipped the scalding meat under his battered hat, and stood there with the hot fat running down his face, trying to look unconcerned as the foreman came up.

The foreman knew "Bones." He also knew his men. He looked at "Bones," laughed and said, "Hullo! 'Bones'! what's wrong with yer? You are sweating." So with his poor old bald head blistered and aching he went back to his dug-out to find a friend waiting his coming—a half-wit like himself, just a boy pale and emaciated, with mournful dark eyes.

As "Bones" entered, he was sitting in the corner of the dug-out, rubbing with a dirty rag a brass ring, of which he had dozens, and saying to himself in a dull lifeless tone, "Is it copper? Is it gold? Is it copper? Is it gold?" He looked up like a frightened rabbit as "Old Bones" crawled in and sat down beside him. They shared the piece of meat, and "Bones" took out his pipe, and filled it with dry tea leaves, and lit it; and there they sat till night

came down, and the little grey shapes came out, and scurried round in search of food.

Later on "Bones," who had been attending to the fire, said, "What about a drop of tea, Jimmy lad? Like a drop of tea?"

Jimmy looked up and nodded his head, but never stopped his monotonous drone—"Is it copper? Is it gold?"

"Go an' get the water Jimmy, go an' git a tin full, out of the canal," said "Bones."

Jimmy stopped his chant for a second and looked terrified. Jimmy was afraid of the dark, and more so of the water. The mist is thick along the canal bank, and Jimmy once saw a 'dead drowned man.'

He didn't like the idea at all, neither did "Bones."

"You're afraid," said Jimmy.

"Course I ain't afraid," said "Bones," flinging a stone at a little grey shape that had ventured too near, and now scurried off with a squeak.

"Yes you are," said Jimmy, "afraid, you are, of falling in and gettin' drownded like the man I saw up at the lock."

"No I ain't, I've falled in," said "Bones" proudly, "I've been in with the water right over me 'ead. That's mor'n you've done,

You ain't never committed suicide, 'ave yer?"

"Is it copper? Is it gold?" droned Jimmy.

"No? Well I 'ave," went on "Bones."

Jimmy looked up with terror in his eyes.

"Was it in the dark?" he said.

"Yes it was," replied "Bones," hurling another stone. "Did I never tell yer about it?"

"I got so fed up one day, I says to meself, 'ere goes 'Bones.' I 'ad a 'alf dollar, what I'd saved up, so I goes out to the pub, an' I 'as a couple o' pints, an' I takes a pint with me. Then I goes a couple o' miles down the tow path. I didn't want to commit suicide too near 'ome. So I walks on till I gets to 'The Pleasure Trip' pub, and I finds I've just got enough left for another couple o' pints. So I goes in an' gits 'em, and stays there till chucking out time."

"Is it copper? Is it gold?" droned Jimmy.

"Well then I gits on to the tow path again, an' I finds a quiet spot, an' I sits down, an' I drinks the pint I 'ad in me pocket, an' throws the bottle away, an' I says to meself, 'git up "Bones" an' let yerself sit down.' So

I gits up an' I says ''ere goes "Bones."' An', as I said it, I falls backwards right into the water."

"Is it copper? Is it gold?" droned Jimmy, his great scared eyes fixed on his friend, his face white with terror, but still rubbing his rings.

"You've never 'ad your 'ead right under the water, 'ave yer?" said "Bones."

Jimmy trembled at the thought.

"Ah!" went on "Bones," "it's a terrible feeling. Right down to the bottom I went, an' I comes up."

"Is it copper, is it gold?" droned Jimmy.

"Twice I goes down, an' I was just going down the third time, when I grabs a pipe. I 'angs on an' I prays."

"Oh God, for God's sake don't let 'Bones' drown."

"I thought I were finished for sure. Me mouth was full o' water, me ear 'oles was full o' water, an' I was wet all over."

"Is it copper? Is it gold?" droned Jimmy.

"So I climbs up the bank, an' gits out, an' I sees an 'ut near where they was building some new 'ouses. I crawls in, an' I was just wringing

the water out of me clothes, when a copper shines 'is light right on me face."

" 'Ere ! " 'e says, " there's been enuff stuff pinched round 'ere lately, git out of it."

" So I comes back 'ome, an' lights a fire an' drys me clothes. I've 'ad mor'n my share o' water."

" So, take the tin Jimmy lad. Now you 'ave a basin of it."

" Is it copper ? Is it gold ? " droned Jimmy, but he didn't stir.

* * * * * *

An inquest was held on Tuesday last on a man found lying in a hole in the " Tip " at Sunbury.

Identification was impossible, as there was only the skeleton left. The remains had evidently been eaten by rats.

SABLE STOLE

Miss Lamb was a gentle woman in reduced circumstances—very precise, very proud and very poor. She was a tall spare woman, her age somewhere in the late sixties. She had never been on a holiday for almost as long as she could remember. And now she was to go for a fortnight to her sister in Cornwall. She was happy and excited at the prospect.

She got out the portmanteau from under her bed, dusted and polished it. It had not seen much of the world, that portmanteau. She bought a few mauve flowers for her hat, and a new veil, and finally got out her proudest possession, which was to put the finishing touch to the ensemble—*her sable stole*. Tenderly she took it out of it's wrappings, shook it, and laid it lovingly against her cheek. It was a reminder of the past, a relic of former affluence. When Miss Lamb wore her sable stole she was not so conscious of the "reduced circumstances."

So away she went to Cornwall. And a most wonderful time she had. The weather had been cool, so she had worn her sable stole

which, to her great delight, had been much admired.

Her holiday over, she returned to her Kensington boarding-house. She had had some tea and was in her room unpacking. She unpacked as she did most things, without fuss or haste, taking each article out and putting it in its accustomed place quietly and methodically. She was so engaged when suddenly she uttered a cry of dismay. Frantically she began to search through her portmanteau, emptying everything on the floor. She searched, too, through her cupboard and through her drawers—everywhere. At last she sank down on the nearest chair, her face pale and her lips trembling.

Just at that moment came a knock at the door, and the voice of her favourite young lady was heard asking if she might come in.

" Oh ! my dear, do," replied Miss Lamb, " I am in such trouble. What do you think ? My portmanteau has been rifled. The thieves must have got at it while it was in the luggage van. My dear, isn't it a catastrophe ? They've taken——"

" Not your lovely stole ? " said the favourite young lady.

"NO!" replied Miss Lamb, her voice quivering with indignation, "a stick of rock and a hair-net. I shall write to the Company about it."

"MISERY JANE"

I'm the eldest one at our 'ouse and I wish I
wasn't too,
For the others get a better time than me, I'm
sure they do.
Me mother's always on to me . . . she jaws
me all the day,
If I knew where to run to . . . straight I think
I'd run away.
There's me sister Gladys too . . . she's a tell
tale cat,
To make me late for school to-day, she's gone
and 'id me 'at.

If I only touch her, see, she screams, and makes
a noise,
She goes and tells me mother I've been playing
with the boys.
Then me mother tells me father when he comes
home to his tea,
An' I don't arf get a 'iding when me father
starts on me.

Oh I wish to goodness I could catch the measles.
I tried to, off of Gertie Brown next door,
But when me mother saw me breathin' near 'er,
She wouldn't let me go out any more.
The 'appiest I ever was, was when I got the mumps;
They were nice to me when I was ill in bed,
But directly I got better, they were onto me again.
Never mind . . . they'll all be sorry when I'm dead.

Most every day at school, I get the cane because I'm late;
Me teacher says I always come in an untidy state.
Well, I have to wash our Edna, and our Freda and our Alf,
And get them off to school before I've time to wash myself.
When I come home to dinner, mother always says 'ere you,
Get this Baby off to sleep . . . be sharp about it too;
And take your father's dinner . . . don't spill the gravy . . . mind,

By the time I get to school . . . it's 'arf past
two I find.
Then me pinny all looks dirty . . . I've no
time to do me hair,
And then me teacher calls me slovenly . . .
It isn't fair.

I tried to starve to death the other morning,
I went to school without me breakfast see . . .
And I didn't have no dinner neither . . .
But I got so hungry when it got to tea.
I walked in all the puddles yesterday to see if I
could
Catch a cold before I went to bed.
But I only caught the toothache and they say
it serves me right.
Never mind . . . they'll all be sorry when I'm
dead.

There's a lovely tale in our schoolbooks,
About a girl called May,
Who saved a little boy from being run over one
day.
And his father who was very rich, made up his
mind he would
Adopt this little girl and have 'er for his own
for good.

So when I read about it, see, I thought I'd have
a try,
And save someone and get adopted too, why
shouldn't I ?
So to-day I saw a gentleman walk right up near
a tram ;
I pulled his coat to save him, and he fell and
then said a wicked word.
He said he'd tell a pleeceman, and he hit me
with his cane ;
Doesn't matter what I try to do—it's just the
same.

Me 'ead was aching awful bad this morning,
So me mother says some medicine for you.
Then she sent me for some pills oh I do 'ate
'em ;
I can't never swallow pills can you ?
But coming back I thought I'd try and take one
by meself,
And I did and told me mother, but she said it
was a lie,
And now she's made me take another one,
Never mind, they'll all be sorry when I'm dead.

FOR PITY'S SAKE

"HULLO! How goes it? You look about as cheerful as a funeral. What's up?"

Thus Jerry Sims greeted his pal Jim Turner.

"Oh! I'm fed up," replied Jim. "'Ave you got the price of drink on yer? I'm gasping."

"It'll just about run to it," said Jerry.

So they adjourned and over their glasses of beer they talked.

"Things is bad, aint they? I don't ever remember things being so bad," Jim was saying, "I've been hunting around for weeks and weeks and can't get 'old of anything. I can't ask yer to 'ave one with me. I've got three 'appence to be exact."

"I'm pretty much in the same boat," said Jerry, "can't we do something or somebody? Let's think."

So they thought, and for a few moments neither spoke. Then Jerry said, "I know! Could yer lay your five of clubs on ten bob within an hour? Do yer know anybody that would let yer 'ave it? I tell yer why. I just thought of it. I met a chap this morning. A

greengrocer 'e is, an he's over-loaded 'isself with grapes ;—pretty rotten they are too from what 'e says. 'E'd be glad to get rid of 'em cheap. I know where I can borrer a barrer. If you can get 'old of the ready we'll 'awk 'em. We oughter be able to knock out a bob or two that way. What do yer say ? "

" I'm on," said Jim, " if I can get the dough. I'll do me best anyway."

" Right oh ! Meet me 'ere in an hour. I'll go and find the chap and see what I can do. So long."

" So long," replied Jim. And they parted.

Well, Jerry borrowed a barrow and Jim borrowed ten shillings and the greengrocer was relieved of his grapes. They set out their wares and made them look as tempting as possible, no easy matter with the material at their command, and took their stand at the corner of a busy street in Acton. They were soon doing a roaring trade with the help of Jerry's nimble fingers.

Wonderful fingers had Jerry. He could count you nine shillings change right into your hand, and if you examined it a second later—which most people did not—there would be but seven shillings. So, what with the hot weather and Jerry's leger-de-main, things were

looking rosy and all would have been well had it not been for Jim's conscience.

They had been there for about half an hour, when a poorly-dressed, pale, tired-looking woman (studied closely there was a certain vacancy in her expression) came up and asked for a pound of grapes. She tendered a ten shilling note.

Jerry was no respecter of persons. He only saw the money and his manipulation of it made Jim's heart ache.

"Don't do it on 'er, Jerry," Jim pleaded, "'ave a 'art. She's only a poor working woman. Tell 'er yer gave 'er the wrong change and give 'er 'er money back. We shan't 'ave any more luck if yer don't."

"Don't be a fool," said Jerry.

But the reference to luck worried him.

"'Ere Missus," he shouted, calling 'er back, "I gave yer the wrong change, didn't I?"

"Yes," said the woman, looking in her purse, "I gave yer a quid."

"NO! Yer gave me 'arf a quid," said Jerry

"I gave yer a quid," shouted the woman.

"You gave me 'arf a quid, and I gave yer two bob short in yer change I believe," said Jerry.

"You give me change for my quid, you daylight robber," she screamed.

A crowd gathered.

"I give 'im a quid and 'e's gave me the wrong change. 'E owned it hisself. Cheating crook. Trying to do the dirty on a poor widow."

She had the sympathy of the crowd.

"Give the woman her right change," said one.

"Play the game. Fetch a policeman," said another.

So Jerry, scenting trouble, grabbed hold of the barrow and they made off up the street, the sad-faced one following them shrieking and cursing.

It was then Jim tumbled that she had had a couple.

The partners did not speak for a long time.

Then said Jim: "How did I know she was ginned up? She looked so miserable I felt sorry for 'er."

"That blinking conscience of yours will get you into trouble one of these days, you see if it don't," said Jerry. "Just as we was doing fine too. Conscience! Aw! you make me sick. Conscience!"

EARLY TO RISE

Bill Gillie was an old sailorman. For forty years he had followed the sea. Now, age and rheumatism, that curse of sailormen, compelled him to drop anchor, and he had settled down in a little street, somewhere off the King's Road, Chelsea, in company with the old age pension.

A bluff good natured old man he was, with a wonderful vocabulary of queer oaths.

He never went to bed—never seemed to sleep—just shuffled round, or sat in his big arm-chair, by the fire (which was kept going night and day), sucking noisily at his old pipe.

His favourite beverage was strong tea, and the teapot was always stewing on the hob.

Old Bill had one son, Jack, the very antithesis of his father. A lazy, spineless youth, without ambition.

Jack had one hobby, " Bed," but working at a bakery and commencing work at 4 a.m., he could only indulge in it under difficulties.

And the one worry of the old man's life was getting him up in the morning.

Old Bill would put the clock on a couple of

hours. Sometimes Jack himself would put it on an hour. Consequently with them it was Wednesday, whereas it was only Tuesday.

Jack shared the one bedroom with a lodger. The lodger worked on the railway, and it was quite alright when he was on night shift, but when he was on day shift there was always trouble, for every morning at half-past two, this was the usual routine.

Old Bill would get up from his armchair, shuffle across the kitchen to the bedroom to his son's bed-side, and shake him, and in a whisper like a fog horn would say, "Jack! my one and only son, it's yer father what's a calling of yer Jack."

2.45 a.m. "Jack my boy, it's yer father what's a calling of yer, here's a nice cup of tea!"

3 a.m. "Come on Jack my boy you'll be late."

To which Jack replies, "I ain't never been there on time, and I ain't going to break the ice now."

3.15 a.m. "Jack my son, your breakfast is all ready."

3.30 a.m. "Jack my boy! your breakfast is getting cold, my son!"

3.45 a.m. "Come on Jack my boy, you haven't drunk yer tea, come on!"

4 a.m. " Git a gait on yer, yer blinking son of a gun ! or I'll tan yer 'ide, big as yer are ! Shake a leg yer blighter ! You'r no son of mine ! I wouldn't own yer. . . ."

* * * * * *

Then Jack got up.

WHAT AN ARTIST!

AIN'T it funny 'ow some people gets a living without work,
While others 'ave to slave like you and me.
The lady what I'm charing for she says the other day,
'Ere's some tickets for the Royal Academy.
So Bill and me we dosses up and goes to see the show,
But the pictures—Lord! I couldn't understand.
One picture, see, I could 'ave swore they'd 'ung it upside down,
When a lady next to me says, "Ain't it grand?"

"Ain't it lovely? What a artist! What a artist! Oh! Divine!
The coulours is entrancing ain't they?" I says, "not for mine.
'Ave yer seen the one they call the Maidens' Prayer, mum, now that's fine.
'E was a artist. What a artist!"

Yer needn't paint to be an artist, Binks wot runs our lift
At the mansions take my word 'e's bound to rise.
He'll kick yer bucket over and 'e'll make yer feel that small,
Yer don't know why but you apologise.
'E's been an actor. Yes! 'E's played some long parts in 'is time.
I saw 'im play the neck of a giraffe.
Oh! 'E's very, very clever, but a very thirsty man.
'E'd top any bill at mopping 'arf and 'arf.

'E's a artist to his finger tips. I tell yer in what way.
If anybody's shouting one 'e's there all bright and gay,
But the way 'e'll change the subject when it comes 'is turn to pay.
What a artist! What a artist!

Some women is born artists. Look at Emma what's-'er-name.
She's the parlour maid at number forty-four.
She never does no work but get's 'er wages just the same,

And outside of that she gets a good deal more.
It's 'er artful way. She's got a dozen chaps as
I know of.
I peeps behind the blind and see 'em there,
And she dresses up the blighter like a duchess
so she does.
And now she's gone and 'ennered all 'er 'air.

She 'aint nothing much to look at, but for that
she never mopes
She tells 'em all the tale. They buys 'er rings
and scented soaps.
And she never stays out late, but when it comes
to raising 'opes,
What an Artist! What an Artist!

THEIR NAME WAS TRESSIDER

THERE were four of them.

Their name was Tressider. The proud Tressiders they used to be called, until a bank crash brought about their father's ruin, and untimely death, and reduced them to an income so small, that it was barely sufficient for them to live upon.

" Mother dear " was very old. Over ninety she was, almost blind, slightly deaf, and she could only get about with the aid of a chair, on the back of which she leaned, and then wiggled the chair along to where she wished to go. She had not been upstairs for years. The feat was beyond her.

Then there was Jane, the elder daughter. Her age was sixty-nine, and her whole time was given up to attending to her mother.

Then came Susan, the second daughter. She was sixty-seven, and she kept house for her mother and sisters. Spare, flat-chested spinsters they were, of proud and dignified bearing.

Then came buxom little Mary, the baby of the family. Mary was sixty-five, and the two elder sisters stood rather in awe of her. For

didn't Mary rub shoulders with the world? Wasn't she school-mistress at Kendal Place School?

It had been a sad blow to their pride when, some years before, their little sister had announced her intention of becoming a school-mistress. So undignified for a Tressider! But now they rather admired and a little envied this sister, who had had the courage to leave the shelter of home, and go out into the world of which they knew nothing. Moreover, their income was so small, that "Mother dear" would not have had the many little luxuries which Mary's salary had made possible.

And now Mary was sixty-five, and Mary had to retire. The school was making her a presentation. It was to be a great event, and "Mother dear" had expressed a desire to be present.

"But, Mother dear, how can you go?" argued the daughters. "You know you can't walk without your chair, and the school is quite a distance."

"I can have my nice taxi-man," replied "Mother dear," "the one that drove me to the nursing home, to see poor Mrs. Oliver."

The sisters held a conference and decided that it was possible. An extravagance cer-

tainly, but on this occasion permissable. They went to the post office, and rang up the garage.

Could they have a car, and the driver that drove them the last time? Such a nice kind man he was.

The man in the office said that all their drivers were nice kind men, but he thought he recognised from their description the particular man they wanted.

Could the driver be at the house by two o'clock? He could! And he was. And he waited.

Nothing happened until a quarter past two. Then a little maid brought out some cushions, and placed them in the taxi. At half past two she again appeared, this time with a hassock, and she volunteered the information that the ladies would not be long. At a quarter to three out they came—"Mother dear" wiggling her chair in front of her, a daughter on either side, telling her which foot to put down first. They had got half way down the garden path, when Susan called "stop!" She turned back, and ran quickly upstairs, and then reappeared in about five minutes with a set of false teeth in her hand. Such big white teeth they were. You could have

written "In loving memory" on any one of them!

"You've forgotten your teeth 'Mother dear,'" she said. "Turn this way."

"Mother dear" turned with difficulty, Susan inserted them, and pressed them "hard home." And when they were in, "Mother dear" didn't look a day over eighty.

They got to the door of the taxi, and Jane placed the hassock for "Mother dear" to stand on. Then Jane got into the cab, and Susan pushed, and Jane pulled, and with the good kind taxi driver's help, they got "Mother dear" in. Jane placed a cushion at her back. There were cushions to the left of her, cushions to the right of her, cushions behind her, in fact so many were there, that she tilted forward on to the edge of the seat, and sat there smiling, looking for all the world like a queen, as Susan said. Then Jane instructed the taxi-driver to go carefully. So they arrived at Kendal Place School.

As they drew up at the entrance, two of the cleanest-and-best-behaved-boys-in-the-school stood at attention there. As the taxi door opened they saluted. Jane alighted first, and put down the hassock and the chair, and then turned to help the old lady. But

"Mother dear" was too timid or too tired. She couldn't get on to her feet. So the taxi-driver asked if he should carry her.

"Just put your arm on my shoulders, Madame," he said, and lifted her. But she would not let go of the cab. Eventually they got her out, and Susan placed her chair. She leant on it and very slowly wiggled it up to the school doorway, over which was the word "Infants." So in they went!

The two cleanest-and-best-behaved-boys-in-the-school stood by the taxi bewildered. They were called to attention by Jane, who came back to the cab. She gave to one the hassock, and to the other a cushion and a shawl, and told them to follow "Mother dear." A few minutes afterwards Susan came back to tell the taxi-driver to be sure to be there by four o'clock.

"We and 'Mother dear' will be quite ready by then," she said.

After the ceremony there was a guard of honour of about thirty of the school children drawn up from the school door to the taxi, their numbers supplemented by a few young teachers and some mothers, who had come to fetch their children home.

As "Mother dear" came down the pathway

wiggling her chair, the very cleanest-and-best-behaved-boy-in-the-school walked down in front of her carrying a bunch of wallflowers, which he gave to the taxi-driver. The taxi-driver placed them on the seat. There was a card attached to them and it read :

" To Mrs. Tressider, from the staff and children of Kendal Place School, wishing her long life and happiness."

Just as they were driving off the cleanest-and-best-behaved-boy-in-the-school, who had been playing about with the taxi-meter, was heard to remark with glee :

" They've got seven and six to pay already."

THE RUNAWAY

WANGANUI was all agog. Peter had run away.

Peter was a red headed " man " of fifteen, with an overwhelming desire to see the world. Everybody in Wanganui knew this. Wanganui is not very large.

Peter had one brother in England, and another brother on the eve of sailing for the same place, and Peter wanted to go too. But stern fate, in the shape of father and mother, said No !

" Bernard and Jack have travelled, and here I've never been out of New Zealand," he said to his mother.

" There's plenty of time for you," she replied.

And so it was left, and now—

Wanganui was all agog. Peter had run away.

He had left Wanganui on the Saturday for his holiday to an Aunt at Hawkes Bay, but he had gone direct to Wellington instead, first drawing his savings out of the Post Office Savings Bank—about twenty-five pounds.

His Aunt met the train at Hawkes Bay, but as he didn't arrive, she got on the long distance telephone to his mother, to enquire the reason.

Then the trouble started.

His father and mother were nearly frantic. Their first thought was Wellington, as most of the big liners leave from there, and knowing his ambition and determination to travel, they guessed he would make for there. So his father went post haste to Wellington and hunted everywhere. Then, because he could not neglect his business, he put the matter in the hands of the police, engaged detectives, gave a description of the missing boy, and hurried back to Wanganui, where his wife anxiously awaited him.

Of course Peter was in Wellington. He had put up at a little hotel on the outskirts, and had kept to his room. He had ascertained that his brother was leaving New Zealand by the *S.S. Athenic*. She was due to sail on the Thursday evening. He had made up his mind to work his passage home on the same boat, if possible, as pantry boy or stoker.

The day before she left Peter was getting tired of hiding, and thought he might risk a visit to the pictures. He did, and coming out

ran right into the arms of a young school chum. The chum wanted to know the why and the wherefore, so Peter explained, and the chum was sworn to secrecy. But directly he got home he told his mother. His mother got on the 'phone to Peter's mother—and she came down to Wellington immediately by car—sought the detective, and together they went to Peter's hotel. He was out when they arrived, but his luggage, ready labelled, was in the entrance hall.

Presently he came in puffing a cigarette. He walked towards the stairs, but stopped short on seeing his mother.

"Oh," he said, "you're here, are you?"

The detective went up to him, and took the cigarette from his hand.

"You've no right to be smoking, you're under age," he said sternly. "Have you any more of these?"

Peter produced the packet and handed it to him.

"Now then," said the detective, "your mother wants you to leave here and stay the night at her hotel, and then go back with her to Wanganui to-morrow."

"But," said Peter, loath to give up his new found freedom, "I've paid up here until to-

morrow morning and I'm going to stop here."

"Well if you won't go with your mother, you'd better come along with me," said the detective.

Peter hesitated and then said, "all right, I'll go with Mother." And he went.

The next day they called at the detective's house to thank him, and say good-bye. While they were there they met his wife.

On the way back afterwards, Peter's mother said :

"I think it would be nice, Peter, if you were to buy the detective's wife a nice present. A piece of plate or something costing about five pounds. You've got your money. We'll go along to Stuart Dawson's now and choose it. It's only what you ought to do after all his kindness, and the trouble he has taken in finding you."

"What!" said Peter, aghast at such a proposal. "Do you mean to say I've got to spend five pounds of my money. Oh! that's not fair! I didn't want to be found. Five pounds! And he didn't find me at all. That's pretty thick, that is—I call that crook. Oh! No. That's all wrong.

* * * * *

It was a nice piece of plate Peter bought, and it cost a little over five pounds, but as his mother said, Peter was worth every penny of it.

THE VAMP

I'm going to dance this evening, when my work is done,
It's to be a grand affair, and there'll be lots of fun ;
For Squire's son is come of age, that means he's twenty-one.
I never go to such-like things, I've not the time yer know,
But Squire said to Granddad, that everyone must go.
And as the Squire is good to us, of course we can't say no.

Josiah Smiths'es son is going too I heard them say.
My ! He is a lovely lad, and often looks my way.
And I, I've had my eye on 'im, for many a long day.
And Lizzie Green, her at the store, is certain to be there,
I don't know why I'm sure, but Lizzie Green I can't abear.
She knows Josiah Smiths'es son, and she's got such curly hair.

I curled my hair in rags last night, and took it
out to-day.
I damped it first with water, that keeps it in
they say.
Now it's straighter than a poker! It always
curls that away.
My dress it isn't elegant, and my shoes are not
too new,
But I've a ribbon for my hair, that makes my
eyes so blue,
And there's my mother's long gold chain, I
think I'll wear that too.

Josiah Smiths'es son has got to dance with me
to-night.
I'll rub my face all rosy, and I know my eyes
are bright,
And I'm going to make him love me, though I
know it isn't right.
He shall not dance with Lizzie Green, he's got
to dance with me.
I've got to make him understand, I've got to
make him see;
For I love Josiah Smiths'es son, I love him
terribly.

LOST AND STRAYED

BILL wanted to get married, so he bought a Ford car, a four-seater it was and he called it "Florrie." He bought it because he said he could see a way of knocking out a good living by running people from the village public-house to the district railway station, which was three miles away.

The first day he started the new venture it turned out better than he expected, and he was so pleased with himself, that after taking his last fare to the station about eleven o'clock, he drove round to see his girl. When he got there, she was in her dressing gown and slippers, just off to bed.

"Come for a run, old girl," he said. "I want you to see how beautifully she goes."

"Oh, but I can't!" replied May, "I'm all undressed, I've got my shoes off and I'm not putting them on again for anybody. My corns have been giving me gyp."

"Aw! Come on," said Bill, "slip on a coat or something and I tell you what: Come in your stockings, you won't be getting out. Come on, just round the houses."

May made one or two more objections which Bill over-ruled, so at last she consented.

" Don't make a noise starting the car," said May, " you'll wake Mum and Dad, and they've been asleep hours."

So Bill started her up and off they went. They had been going for some time. May was admiring " Florrie " and the sure way Bill handled her, and Bill was pointing out " Florrie's " good points. In fact, they had forgotten the passing of time until " Florrie " jibbed, and Bill looked at his watch. It was one o'clock and they were thirty odd miles from home.

Bill coaxed " Florrie " down a quiet lane, and after a long survey found he had run out of petrol.

" I shall have to get some, old girl," he said to May. " We can't stop here all night. We passed a village about a mile back. You won't mind being left, will you ? You'll be quite all right."

" Oh, dear ! " said May, in a frightened voice. " I don't like the idea of being left here by myself. I wish to goodness I'd put my shoes on. Will it hurt, do you think, if I came with you in my stockings ? "

" My dear girl," replied Bill, " why, you'd

cut your feet to pieces on these roads. Here, put my coat on. I don't want it. I'm going to run all the way and shall be back in two shakes." And off he went at top speed.

He got to the village and found the garage, but it was closed and there was no answer to his repeated knockings. He ran on again, right into the arms of a policeman this time. The policeman turned his lamp full on him and asked him why the hurry. Bill explained and the policeman directed him to an all-night petrol station, a couple of miles still further on. So on went Bill, got his petrol and set off back again.

It was slower going now. The petrol was heavy, and Bill was tired. He got to the village all right and out into the country again, and then found to his horror that he had lost his way.

He retraced his steps. The petrol felt like a ton weight now. He leant against a wall for a second or two to get his wind, when he noticed a cottage with a clump of bushes in the front garden. He slipped in, hid the tin behind the bushes, and went on again; up one lane, down another, but no sign of "Florrie." Bill was getting frantic. He stood for a moment racking his brain trying to remember the direction

he should go—when he became aware of somebody sobbing. He followed the sound and came upon "Florrie," with May weeping and terrified, huddled at the bottom.

It was some time before he could calm her but after a while she controlled her sobs and, although still scared and shaky, grew more rational, dried her eyes and listened to Bill's explanation. But when he said he had hidden the petrol and must go back for it, she absolutely refused to be left again. Shoes or no shoes she was going with him this time. So they went together to the village and Bill discovered that in his hurry he had forgotten to mark the house. All the cottages seemed to have clumps of bushes in the garden but no petrol. Bill struck match after match, and they searched the gardens of about a dozen cottages before they found it. By this time May was crying quietly. Her feet were sore and her corns were giving her more than gyp.

There was a heavy mist now, and they had been walking some little way, when Bill became uneasy. Were they on the right road? They were out in the country again, but neither "Florrie" nor the lane could they see. May became hysterical. Bill swore good and hard.

They tramped back to the village and took their bearings again.

It was breaking day when they eventually found "Florrie." By then they were both wretched, bad-tempered and tired. Each blamed the other and the argument ended in a quarrel.

Bill filled "Florrie" up and May climbed in the back seat this time, and home they went. But with thoughts of a cup of tea and bed, May's bad temper vanished.

Just before they got to her road, they were chatting and laughing over it all. Then said May, "I think I'd better get out at the top of the street and walk down, for if Mrs. Jenner next door sees me driving up with you at this hour of the morning—my name's Mud."

"I'm sorry, May, old girl, I wouldn't have had it happen for worlds—it was my fault I know but——"

"Never mind," soothed May, "it's all over now. I would like to have you come in and have a cup of tea—but if Mrs. Jenner——"

"Look here, May!" broke in Bill, "'Florrie' is going to be a paying proposition. I'd stake my life on it. Now listen. If you're agreeable, I'll get a special licence to-morrow. I can afford it now and we'll be married at once.

Say you will, May, because I'm just dying for a cup of tea."

"So am I," said May, as they drew up at the house, "and my corns are giving me gyp. Come in, Bill."

ART

ENA HATHER was a Music Hall artist, and like many other Music Hall artists, was faced with an empty date book. For the Music Halls were feeling the pinch of the numberless counter attractions which had sprung into being during the last few years, and were in a bad way.

It was New Year's Week and Ena was playing one of the big Music Halls in Scotland.

The hall had a drink licence, and being New Year's day the audience had taken advantage of it.

They were noisy and uninterested, in fact as the show progressed, what with doors banging and people walking in and out of the bar, drunken men shouting and cat calling, and policemen ejecting them—the auditorium was in an uproar, and the atrists in despair.

They gave up trying to entertain, and got through their shows as quickly as they dare, but it was a nerve-racking business, and Ena at the finish of her turn was trembling and sobbing.

At the first house that evening the audience were, if anything, worse than at the matinee.

Ena, scared and shaking, sought the manager.

It was some time before he could be found. He had been busy helping the " chuckers-out " he said.

" Well my dear, what can I do for you ?— I'm very busy, I can't stop a minute."

" Oh ! please " said Ena, " don't ask me to go on the second house. I shall die if you insist, I'm simply terrified of them. If I have to face that again to-night, I shall be too upset to play the rest of the week."

" Oh ! my dear Miss Hather " said the manager, " don't worry, just make an appearance ! I don't mind if you cut your act a bit. Do you know, we've opened twenty dozen more bottles of bass in the gallery bar than we did last year."

The managers were complaining that audiences were tired of the same old names and the same old business.

So Ena worked, studied and devised a new act, and changed her name.

But then the managers complained that she was unknown. One agent she went to

promised to see her if she were playing anywhere.

At that she arranged for a trial week at a surburban hall given over to pictures and trial turns.

It was said that managers and agents went there in search of talent, but it was just an excuse for the management to get turns for their bill, without paying for them.

There were four girls in the dressing-room when Ena arrived on the Monday evening. A pair of sisters, a lady who manipulated handbells and a young girl, who called herself a soubrette; she sang American songs in a loud harsh voice with a cockney accent.

She was first turn, and while she was singing, the handbell ringer and the sisters fell to discussing her.

"I don't like her voice, do you?" said one sister.

"No!" said the other, "ain't she common!"

"Well, wot can yer expect oiling kippers all day," said the handbell lady.

As Ena came off after her turn the soubrette came up to her. "Didn't you go well?" she said, "I like that first song you sang. Didn't I hear you say it was published by Reynolds?"

"So it is," replied Ena.

" Well, that's funny," said the other—" we get that paper every Sunday, and I've never seen it."

The agent didn't come to see Ena's show after all. When she called at his office the next morning he said, he was very sorry, but Sir Oswald had sent for him, and, as they had much business to discuss, he was unable to get away.

THE LITTLE MOTHER

MOTHER went into the hospital last Monday
So now I'm bringing up the family.
There's six of 'em and oh! they are a 'andful,
But I'm going to make 'em different, you see.
They've got to do exactly what I tell 'em
And not answer back or give me any cheek,
And they've got to say their prayers and keep
their elbows off the table,
Or I'll lock 'em in the scullery for a week.

'Cos I'm bringing up the children now
I'm bringing up the family.
And now instead of me our Fred
Has to light the kitchen fire yer see,
And I tell him every morning
He's to bring me up a cup of tea.
'Cos now I'm the mother of 'arf a dozen kids;
I'm bringing up the family.

I'm going to bring 'em up like ladies' children,
They've got to say no thank you and yes please,
And they've got to wash behind their ears and
necks too,

Or I'll only give 'em dry bread for their teas.
I'll comb their tangled 'air out if I tell yer,
And if they 'owl I'll give 'em all the stick,
And if Mrs. Clark next door comes interfering
  I shall tell 'er
To jolly well mind 'er own business quick.

'Cos I'm bringing up the children now
I'm bringing up the family,
Mother says she's glad, now that she's took bad,
She's got a growed-up girl like me.
I can do but for our Arthur,
Oh ! he is a little brute, look, see,
He punched me this morning 'cos I made 'im
  say 'is grace,
I'm bringing up the family.

Dear me, children are a nuisance.
There's Arthur and there's Fred and Freda see
And then there is the baby—'is name's Cyril,
And Winifred, the ugly cat and me.
I'm Father's wife but 'e don't seem to think so,
'E 'it me 'cos I smashed a plate to-day.
He daren't 'it me mother if she went and
  smashed a plate,
So why 'it me ? I'm mother, ain't I, eh ?

'ERE !

'Cos I'm bringing up the children now
I'm bringing up the family.
It isn't fair and if I dare
I'd 'it 'im same as 'e 'it me.
All my relations told me
Not to marry 'im, but I would, see ;
And now I'm the mother of 'arf a dozen kids,
I'm bringing up the family.

TWENTY YEARS' GROWTH

Up at the Kommetje at Cape Point, South Africa, there used to be a large low house of the bungalow type, with a general store attached. The store was also the Post Office. It was also a cafe for the folk at the week-end bungalows. It catered for the government employees at the Telegraph and Wireless departments, before their quarters were built; and in addition the house could accommodate any stray tourist that happened along.

At the back of the building a hill rose sheer. In front there was a long enclosed garden, where nothing but acrid bush and shrub would grow. This garden was always a few inches deep in sand, which blew up from the sea-shore. The Atlantic thundered some few hundred yards distant. The front of the house lay right in the eye of the sun almost the whole day through. There was not a tree or shade of any kind when Jan Kirstin, a dear old dutchman, first built it. But finding the heat almost unbearable, to say nothing of the damage to the store goods, he had some twenty years previous, planted two gum trees. He

had watched and tended them, and they had repaid his care by growing strong and vigorous. Now their great shady branches stood between the house and the sun. The children played in their shade, and the Vrows would bring their sewing and their gossip and sit beneath them.

Old "Christmas," was the head boy and rouseabout. He kept an eye on the other kaffirs, cleaned and helped in the shop, and drove the delapidated Ford car into Cape Town. He didn't admire the Gums at all. What were trees to his beloved brass signs, "Post Office," and "Letters," which it was his duty to polish every day, oftener if he got the chance, and which were hidden from the road by these abominable branches. Every time he passed the signs, old "Christmas" would look to see if a speck of dust had spoiled their prestine brilliance. He would give them a polish with an old duster he kept always in his pocket.

Now it happened Jan Kirstin was going to the Paarl, and he was standing in front of the shop, talking to one of the Marconi operators, waiting for "Christmas" to bring up the Ford.

"Yes," he was saying, "these trees have

grown. They quite hide the Post Office signs. I shall have to see about it."

Old " Christmas " overheard this, and while Jan Kirstin was away, he got busy with a ladder and a saw, and lopped off the offending branches. Well and truly did he lop, until the " Post Office " sign shone forth in all its glory, and gave back the sun gleam for gleam.

He stacked the branches up near the wood pile, and waited for his master's return. At the appointed time he took the Ford into Cape Town to meet his baas, and bring him back to the Kommetje. Arriving there, he sprang out to open the door, eagerly scanning his baas's face as he did so, and then looking to where " Post Office," and " Letters," shone forth in golden glory, no longer hidden by that abominable vegetation. Jan Kirstin gave a casual glance round, and an order or two to " Christmas," then noticed that the kaffir was looking eagerly, first at him and then at the Store. He followed his gaze, saw the polished brass signs, then looked to his trees, and his jaw dropped. Then he swore! Long and loudly he swore, and " Christmas " fled, and hid trembling.

At last Jan's anger somewhat abated. He called for " Christmas," who came, his knees

shaking with fear, unable to understand how he had offended.

"Who did this?" roared Jan Kirstin.

"Me, Baas," answered "Christmas."

"Why?" shouted Jan Kirstin.

"Well Baas, you say him hide Post Office, so I—I sorry, Baas, I sorry." The old man was nearly crying, Jan was on the point of striking him, but a glance at the kaffir's woebegone face stopped him.

"Twenty years," he said. "Twenty years it took me to grow those trees, and it wouldn't have taken you twenty minutes with a screw driver to have removed the sign."

* * * * * *

"Strange are the ways of the Masters," thought old "Christmas," as he polished his beloved "Post Office" signs that evening.

TALK ABOUT LUCK

BILL GILCHRIST had just knocked over the other fellow's beer.

"I'm sorry," he said, "my fault. What was it? Bitter?"

"No! that's all right" said the other fellow.

"No! Certainly not," said Bill. "Bitter please Miss. The glass is broken. You'd better take for that too."

"I'm an *unlucky* blighter I am," went on Bill. "Always 'ave been."

"I remember when I was a little 'un, I got a job at a fish-shop as wrapping-up boy. 'Arf a dollar a week me wages was. And me Mother was jolly glad of the money, as we was always pretty 'ard up at 'ome. I'd been at it a few weeks when I got promoted to 'feathering.' You know; skinning the fish and pulling feathers out of the birds. That meant a bit more money, because one of the boys used to sell the feathers and skins and we all shared out. After that I 'ad another promotion. That was to a barrer round. And then I got the sack." It was this way. This was a very swanky shop round about 'Arrods. They served all the nobs.

On the first day I was promoted to the barrer round I was sent out with the orders. Lots of fish there was—Cod, Sole, Whiting, Plaice. 'Course in them days I didn't know the difference between any of 'em They was just fish to me. I was going along Hans Place whistling as large as life, when a kid with a hoop runs right into me. Over I goes and the basket went flying. Of course all the labels came off the fish. I didn't know what to do. So I sticks 'em on somehow. But they was all mixed up and I didn't know t'other from which. They was all wrong. Anyway, I delivered 'em. In them big 'ouses the kitchen maid comes to the door, yer know, and she don't know nothing about the orders. She just takes 'em in. So o' course the cook wouldn't know there was any mistake until it was time to cook 'em."

" So, as I said, I delivers 'em, but when I got back to the shop I 'ad the wind up proper, and I daren't tell 'em. But they soon knew. Complaints came in thick and fast, and I went fast too, with a thick ear."

" *Talk about luck!* "

" Same as when I 'ad them pigs you remember Jim? I 'ad a prize cockerel, lovely bird it was."

"One day I came 'ome with the pig-wash and going to one of the boilers that was full of water with thick scum on top, I noticed the scum was moving about. I thought it was a rat. We 'ad a lot of 'em over at the styes. So I picked up a 'eavy lump of wood and gave it such a slosh. Then I got a stick and fished out . . . my prize cockerel!"

"I got reason to remember that day all right, 'struth I 'ave. I puts the wash into the boilers and sets 'em going when young Bet runs up and says that Baby—that was the mare I 'ad, you remember that mare I 'ad Jack? As nice a mare as ever you set yer eyes on, but a wicked temper—she says that Baby was kicking 'er stable down. Well, I goes down to see about the mare and 'as a deuce of a job with 'er. I'd just got 'er quitened down when Bob Stevens comes running up and tells me the fat was boiling over and the styes was on fire."

"*Talk about luck!*"

"Well talking of Birds, reminds me," says Obbie. "'Ow's this for luck?"

"I used to 'ave a bird what worked at the factory. I met 'er one night and she was looking very down in the mouth. I says 'ullo kid! What's wrong? She wouldn't

let on at first. Then she told me that as she was coming out of the factory that night they pulled 'er up and found four pounds of tea on 'er."

"'What are they going to do about it?' I asks 'er."

"'Summons me for pinching it,' she says."

"And they did, and fined 'er five pounds or fourteen days, and a week to find the money. Well, I thinks, I must find the dough or she'll be in the nick for a fortnight. So off I goes."

"I took a fancy to one—a nice 'ouse it was. There didn't look to be any one at 'ome. But I thought I'd be sure, so I sends a little boy with a note and tells 'im to wait for an answer. Presently he comes back and says 'e can't make nobody 'ear."

"There must be somebody in I tells 'im. Go back and knock 'ard. And 'e did. But nobody came. This is all right, I thinks. I gives 'im tuppence for 'imself and watches' 'im off. Then I nips round the back and lifts the pantry window and gets in. There was some fine stuff there and not a soul about. So as there didn't seem to be any 'urry, I takes swig of whisky, gets some of the silver ready in a cloth, and goes to 'ave a look at the bedrooms. I gets to the top of the stairs and I comes to a

door. I opens it. There was a long passage. I was just turning the corner when I walks right into a woman in a night dress carrying a tray. Blimy! You should 'ave seen me, I didn't wait for anything. I went for me life."

"I found out afterwards that this girl, the maid, was deaf and dumb, and was all alone in the 'ouse. She'd come down in 'er nightie, cooked 'er breakfast and was taking it up to 'erself. But 'ow was I to know? So the bird 'ad to do 'er fourteen days after all."

"*Talk about luck!*"

"Same as last night. We're very busy down at the shop so I didn't get any dinner. Just a mouthful of bread and cheese and a pint. And I never 'ad no tea working late. And I knew me last 'bus 'ad gone. They don't run late to our one-eyed 'ole!"

"So seeing I 'ad a good walk in front of me, and feeling a bit peckish, I goes into a fried fish shop and gets a bit of fish. When I gets along a bit I remembers I 'adn't put no salt on it. I wouldn't give you tuppence for anything without salt. I'm a whale for salt. I sees a little oil shop just closing, so I nips in and asks the chap for a some of salt. Just a pennith, I says. 'E didn't like serving me as it was past

closing time. But in the end 'e gives me a little packet."

"So off I goes and gets a bit on me way. Then I opens me fish and showers the salt all over it. I likes salt. And then I took a mouthful."

"Crimes-of-blinkin-Paris! What do you think it was? Epsom Salts!"

"*Talk about luck!*"

TOMBOY

EVERYBODY calls me good for nothing,
They're always on to me, it isn't fair,
Everybody says I've got no sense,
I've got as much as some of them, so there!
There's half a dozen more like me at our house,
But not one quite as wicked, so they say.
Me teacher says I'll never go to Heaven,
But I don't see why I shouldn't—anyway.

Have you got to be so very good to go there?
Can't you never pinch a bit of nothink, eh?
Have you always got to go to school exact at
nine o'clock
With a clean face and pinny every day?
Can't you ever have a whip behind a lorry?
Nor never ring a bell, nor climb a tree?
Well, if you've got to be so jolly extra special
good to go,
There's lots won't go as well as me.

I can't do nothing right, not never lately,
I had a awful hiding yesterday;
I was looking in the cubbord for the hair-brush,
And I found some cakes me mother'd hid away.

When I came home from school, she said "Sylvina,
Have you been to that cupboard?" I said, 'UM.
I said 'UM 'cause I wouldn't tell a lie, see.
And it's not a lie, is it, if you say 'UM?

She says have you been at those cakes, now tell me
The truth, or I'll thrash you, now you know;
I says "Honor bright, I never touched one."
She says "You dare stand there and tell me so?
I made three and now there's only one there."
I said "That's the one I never touched and see,
She said I told her lies. Well if that's a lie, GOOD GRACIOUS,
There's a lot won't go as well as me.

There's a boy in our school, an' he's a marvel,
William Ernest Stickers is his name;
He's a jolly sight too good to live, is William,
If he does wrong, he never gets the blame.
Teacher says that he's a beautiful example
Of all that a good boy ought to be;
And she sincerely hopes that one day I'll be like him.
Well, he's balmy, so I shouldn't like to be.

Oh but he never makes mistakes, can't
William.
Couldn't do a thing wrong if he tried to do;
But I found something out about old Stickers,
never fear,
I can see our teacher's face when she knows too,
'Cause as I came to school the other morning,
I saw a bill with writing on, ye see;
And it said BILL STICKERS WILL BE PROSECUTED.
So there's another won't go as well as me.

GARTERS

Bill and Hump were tired of the pubs round Acton. Bill wanted to go further afield.

"Right ho," said Hump, "we will."

They did. They went to Shepherds Bush. They sampled many and decided on the Red Lion, where, in addition to a good glass of beer, there was a pretty barmaid, with an Eton crop and skirts to match.

They set about getting acquainted.

"This is a slow burg. Not much doing in this village is there?" said Hump.

"Haven't you been down this way before?" asked the barmaid.

"No," answered Bill, "we don't often stray so far from the West End. Do we Humphrey, old top?"

"No," returned Hump, "not exactly our style, is it old Boy?"

"I say"—he turned to the barmaid, "how would you like to do a theatre up West with us one night? It must be frightfully slow down here for a girl like you."

The barmaid preened and simpered, and was just about to say yes-please-thank you, when

the door swung open and in walked Obbie, the bad lad of the village, and a bosom pal of Bill and Hump. Directly they saw him they turned their backs. They didn't want him to barge in and upset things in front of the barmaid. He looked down and out, he had three day's growth of beard, his boots were down at the heel and he had only just " come out " and would probably soon be " in again." He kept the police busy did Obbie, and at the moment, he looked no fit associate for " gentlemen." So Bill and Hump were hoping they could leave before he recognised them. Hump gave Bill the wink, Bill looked at his watch.

" I say old thing," he said, " do you know it's gone nine ? We shall be late for dinner."

And so with one eye on Obbie they made for the door.

At that moment Obbie turned and saw them.

" Crimes-of-blinkin-Paris ! Strike-me-perishin-pink ! " he yelled. " I 'aven't seen you two since they sent me for me 'olidays. 'Ow are yer boys ? What are yer 'aving ? "

Bill and Hump looked at the barmaid. The barmaid looked at them and sniffed, and then turned her attention to a weedy-looking individual who had just entered the bar, and was asking for " A nail please."

"What's that?" said the barmaid puzzled.

"A nail," said the weedy one.

"Do you want a hammer too?" asked the barmaid.

"No," said the weedy one disgustedly, "not that kind of nail. N'ale what yer drink.

At that moment in walked Dickey Dunn, ex-pugilist and pal of Obbie's.

"Now then," said Obbie, after Dicky had been duly introduced, "let's settle the burning question." What are yer going to 'ave? 'Ere 'aircut" (to the barmaid), "take these orders and look slippy or I'll smack yer 'and. What's yours Bill?"

"'Nail' please," says Bill mimicking the weedy one.

"Yours, Hump?"

"Mine's a 'Nail' too."

"Dickey?"

"I'll have a double-X" said Dickey.

"And mine's a ditto scotch," said Obbie.

"And be quick about it," said Dickey to the barmaid. "I'm dying for one."

"Alright," said the barmaid, "I'll save your life, I'll draw yours first."

To draw the double-X the girl had to stoop to a barrel on the floor. In doing so she revealed a very pretty pair of Garters.

Four pair of eyes blinked their admiration!

"I think," said Bill, as the girl placed the double-X on the counter, "I think I'll change my mind and have a double-X too."

"So will I," said Hump.

"Me too," said Obbie.

"Two double 'lexes' please," said the weedy one.

WINE IS A MOCKER

It was in the very early days of prohibition, long before rum-running became the lucrative profession it now is, and drink was really difficult to obtain.

A small cargo boat, fully laden, was lying over in Brooklyn. She was on the eve of sailing, bound for the Cape. But the ship was one or two firemen short and the chief engineer had gone ashore to try and round up a couple.

Whilst he was away a thin, sandy complexioned man came aboard and asked for him. Failing the chief engineer, he said the chief steward would do.

The chief steward came along and asked him his business.

"I want to work my passage home," was the answer. "I don't care what I do—steward or stokehold—it's all the same to me as long as I get out of this."

"What's your ordinary trade?" queried the chief.

"I've done a bit of sailoring. I was on the Atlantic run for some time." And he men-

tioned one or two boats which the chief steward knew.

" Where are your papers ? " said the chief.

" I've lost them," said the man.

" What are you doing now ? "

" Working on the dock yard."

" Do you mean to tell me that you want to leave a good job, at the wages they pay you here, to work your way back in the stokehold ? What have you been up to ? " asked the chief steward suspiciously, " I don't want the ship held up."

" Well sir," said the man, " I'll tell you the truth. I can't stand this damn prohibition."

So—as he seemed a decent sort of chap, and men were hard to get, and as the chief steward liked a drink too—it was settled. And the man signed on as Tom Denny, fireman.

A day out from New York Denny was reported missing.

" Skulking around somewhere sleeping off that bad boose I suppose," said the chief engineer. " I'll sleep him when I find him."

The ship was thoroughly searched, but there was no sign of the missing man.

" He's gone over the side, curse him," said the second, " and this ain't the *Mauretania*. You miss a man in a tub like this."

But he hadn't gone over the side, he had fallen down an open hatch into the coal bunker. And as they were shovelling the coal his body came through head first. It was so caked with coal dust, that at first the fireman didn't know what to make of it, and it took a good many buckets of water before it became even faintly recognisable.

They brought out his box, and went through his effects, hoping to find some clue to his identity. After a long search they came upon a packet of papers sewn up in the lining of an old jacket. They opened them, but found nothing to show who or what he was—nothing but a few formulæ and receipts for making whisky at home, and a lot of advertisements for patent whisky stills.

So they gave him some irons and " six foot of canvas," and over the side he went. Perhaps it was just as well. They knew where he was this time.

And he couldn't stand this " damn prohibition " anyway.

WHAT'S A GIRL TO DO?

In our village there's a boy what comes sweetheartin' I,
He looks at me so queerly every time I pass him by.
He's a jolly nice young smart young chap and makes love very nicely,
But not a lad you could depend on for your food precisely.

If we didn't 'ave no appetites, I'd marry him to-day
If we didn't need no clothes to wear, I'd be wed right away.
He'd be a husband to be proud of, tall and 'andsome too,
But looks won't fill your stummicks, and, well what's a girl to do?

Sprawled our lengthways on the grass beneath an orchard tree,
'Arf asleep, and 'arf awake as lazy as can be,
Or burried in the clover bloom you'll find him any day,
Watching of the *other* fellows loadin' up the hay.

If clover field was houses, I'd be his wife I know,
They're alright in the summer time, but Oh dear, in the snow!
His hair it crinkles lovely, and his eyes they are so blue,
But crinkly hair won't pay the rent: so wot's a girl to do?

Sometimes I think I'll risk it when he talks so sweet and kind,
But then when I get by miself I always change mi mind.
"Why won't you be mi wife," 'e says, says 'e just yesterday?
"If we were wed, we'd be as happy as the birds in May."

Says I, "George, if I wur a bird I'd not delay, not I.
If children came with feathers on, we'd have no clothes to buy.
If a worm served for your breakfast, and mine and the children too,
I'd marry you, but I don't like worms, so wot's a girl to do?"

OUR CINEMA

JIM WEST was interviewing the manager of the Lynn Park Cinema. He had come in answer to an advertisement for a first-class operator.

"Well that's settled then," said the Boss. "Three pound ten a week and you start Monday. And I want to tell you something! You're the fourth operator I've had in three months. I have had to sack all the others, they were no good. Lazy, saucy lot they were! Didn't know their work, not one of them, and if you don't suit me you know what will happen to you, don't you?"

"Well!" said Jim, "I suppose I shall get the sack too."

"No!" said the Boss, "I'll blinking well shoot you. Another thing," he went on, "you'll see a young fellow here, chucking his weight about, and swanking generally. Well he's my son and he's the manager, but you don't want to take any notice of him, he knows nothing about the business. Come to me if you want to know anything. Now get on with it."

Jim and his 'missus' were very proud of their little home, and were always on the lookout for anything that would add to its comfort and adornment. "Missus" being very handy with her needle, and Jim having learnt fretwork at school, besides being a good amateur carpenter, the home looked very nice, if somewhat over crowded. So hunting round one day at the back of the stage, Jim noticed a cupboard which the cleaners used to keep their metal polish and dusters in. He also noticed the shelves which were of solid oak, and he thought how foolish it was to use real oak shelves for dusters and metal polish, when deal boards would serve the purpose just as well. And the oak!—Well, his missus had been wanting a little medicine cupboard for a long while. So he hunted round some more and found a couple of deal boards. The exchange was made, and Jim's missus got a nice little medicine cupboard.

A week or two later the "boss" came into the room where the operators and the rest of the staff were waiting for the show to start. He was in a "tearing" rage, and he had a couple of deal boards in his hand.

"Here!" he shouted, "has any one of you seen a couple of shelves?"

" Yes ! " said a facetious chap, " you've got 'em in your hand."

The Boss glared.

" I'm not talking about these shelves, I'm talking about a couple of oak shelves some thieving beggar has taken out of the cleaner's cupboard, and put these in their place. Which of you blighters has done it, come on some of you know something about it."

" Well I d'unno nothing about it," said one.

" I've never seen the cupboard," said another.

" Well ! " said Jim West " Fancy ! doing a dirty trick like that, I don't think any of our chaps would do it."

" Well it's a damn funny thing " said the Boss, " and if I find the beggar I'll gaol him, I will an' all." And he stalked out of the room.

There was a long pause. Then Jim West's little assistant, a bright lad who will go far, remarked to Jim.

" 'Artful old blighter ain't he, you know who's got 'em, don't yer ? "

" No ! " said Jim in a startled voice.

" Why ! " went on the boy, " the old devil's get 'em hisself.

TAXI, LADY !

SIMPKINS the taxi driver had just had a steak, and was ready he said for a " long 'un."

His cab was first on the rank. He had been there some time waiting for the Queen's Hall and Maskelynes to " burst." On this occasion the Queen's Hall burst first. As the crowd came out, Simpkins looked around anxiously.

" Taxi, Sir ? Taxi, Lady ? " he said, trying to trap one. But no ! No one seemed to be wanting a Taxi.

Simpkins was feeling a bit disappointed when suddenly he saw two ladies—sisters they looked, very elderly, very prim, and very proper—detach themselves from the crowd, and make straight for his cab. When he saw them coming, he hopped off his seat and started her up, and then turned to the driver behind him.

" You'd better wind up chum, because I'm off," he said.

He stood by the door as the spinsters approached, but they made as if to pass him.

"Taxi, lady, Taxi?" he said eagerly. They looked up rather startled, and then they smiled benignly.

"No thank you, driver," said one, "No thank you. But it's very thoughtful of you to ask, isn't it Susan?"

"Very thoughtful indeed," replied Susan.

Simpkins could scarcely believe his ears.

"But ladies," he said, "are you sure you don't want a taxi?"

"No, thank you very much, driver," said the spinster called Susan, "it's such a pleasant day, we thought of walking a little way."

Simpkins was annoyed. He looked annoyed.

"Have you two 'ighbrows been listening to them chambers?" he said fiercely.

"Yes driver," said the sister called Jane, "and very delightful it was. We enjoyed it very much indeed."

"Very much indeed," echoed the sister called Susan.

"Yes," said Simpkins, now thoroughly angry, "and that's about all you're fit for. That, and a 'bus ride 'ome."

The sisters looked frightened, and clutching each other's arms walked on quickly, staring straight in front of them.

Simpkins shut off his engine, and said a wicked word.

" I'm not off after all, chum," he said to the driver behind him.

" I think I'll 'ang around now, and perhaps I shall get a couple of twisters from Maskelynes. I had two last week, only school boys they was. The fare was two and threepence on the clock, and what do you think? They gave me a two shilling piece, and swore it was 'alf-a-crown. I expect it's the card 'nipulating, coin palming, and disappearing tricks wot they sees inside, puts it into their 'eads, and then they comes out and tries to do it on me, the little twisters."

" Taxi, ladies, taxi? "

'ER UPSTAIRS

'Ere!

Yer know Bayswater don't yer, well yer know
Acacia street,
Well that corner house, it's number twenty-
three.
It's a lodging house, I beg it's pardon, board-
ing house I mean,
And the general factotum there is me.
Well the grub it ain't so dusty, and the missis
she's A.1.,
As fas as work's concerned we always shares.
The only 'lift within the root,' as them there
poets says,
Is that mischief-making cat upstairs.

'Er upstairs, always got 'er nose in folk's
affairs.
Yer can't go down the street but what she's
peeping round the blind,
And the things she says about me, oh she's got
a wicked mind.
For scattering seeds of kindness, I bet you'll
never find,
Another one like 'Er upstairs.

Another thing about her, she's so shocking finnicky,
Particular! well it's beyond belief.
Digs the forks into the cloth, yer know, to see if they was clean,
And wipes the cups round with 'er handkerchief.
She's got a face, Lor' lumme, talk about a dyin' duck,
And talks like she was howling all the while.
Well I've been there two years now, and it's the honest truth,
I'm telling ye, I've never seen her smile.

'Er upstairs, a thumb's mark on the loaf, she glares.
If the missis and me whispers, a thing we often do,
She swears it's 'er we're talking of, and gets in such a stew.
She's the most superspecious woman that I ever knew.
She's the limit she is—'Er upstairs.

And she's so unreasonable, yer know she's got
a dog,
Well, she had a dog afore I took it out.
I lost it, well upon my soul it might have been
a horse,
The way she raved an' put herself about.
She said that I was careless to let it off the lead.
Well, perhaps I was, but don't ye feel a fool,
Walking down the street with a tike tied on a
string.
Besides, I'm in a hurry as a rule.

'Er upstairs, I hate her scantimonious airs.
She can't bear this here costume, she thinks it's
far too bright,
And she had the blinking sauce to say to me
the other night,
That she 'oped I got it 'onestly. Ain't that a
bit alright?
But it's jealousy with 'Er upstairs.

THE BULL FIGHT

JACK played the trombone in a theatre orchestra.

'Erb was a foreman butcher.

Horace was a photographer.

Bill had been in the army and was now on the reserve.

The quartette, all unmarried, were great friends, and usually took their holidays together.

This year, as usual, they were discussing where they should go. They all agreed they were tired of Southend and Margate. Then the wonderful idea struck them: What about the Continent!

They had never been abroad, so off they went to Cook's, and armed with cheap tourist literature, they came home and wrestled with the problem. Where? After long arguments, they decided on Rome.

Horace said he had been reading history, and knew a lot about Nero. And 'Erb said he had been reading the paper and knew a lot about Mussolini. So it was decided, and to Rome they went.

They got there on the Saturday, and by Sunday they had had a surfeit of Churches and were just feeling " wish we'd gone to Southendish," when they heard there was to be a " Bull Fight " at the Stadium.

They, of course, had never seen a bull fight.

They were all excitement as they enquired at the Hotel Bureau, and got the necessary directions to the Stadium. As it was a nice day they decided to walk, and soon succeeded in losing themselves. After much wandering up and down, they thought they had better take a taxi.

They espied one on a rank, a very old taxi, with a very old driver, who was having great difficulty in putting his hood up. They approached him, and asked to be driven to the bull fight. The taxi driver turned his eyes towards heaven, shook his head and shrugged his shoulders. He did not speak English, and not one of them spoke Italian.

So they thought! Then Jack tried putting his first fingers to his forehead, in imitation of horns, and butting at the taxi driver, saying, " Bull Fight! Bull Fight! " But the taxi driver only looked annoyed. Then Bill tried his army French. " Parley vous Francais? " said he. No! The taxi driver did not.

"I know," said Horace, "I'll draw one." So on a leaf of his note book he drew a picture of a bull, a ferocious looking bull, but the taxi driver evidently didn't recognise it as such. He looked vague and puzzled. At last the trombone player hit upon the idea of whistling a few bars of the "Toreador" song from Carmen. A look of dawning intelligence came over the taxi driver's face.

"Si! Si! said he, now alert, and animated, "Si! Si!" And he clambered into his seat.

Having arrived, they took their seats, thirsty for the horrors they had read and heard of.

The first bull to enter the ring was a wan, half-starved looking creature, not much larger than a Shetland pony. It trotted across the arena and stood by the exit, taking no notice of anything or anybody. Then the Banderillos commenced their part of the business.

"What are they doing?" asked Bill.

"Playing darts," replied 'Erb.

But the bull remained apathetic. Dart after dart was thrust into his shoulders, but he didn't seem to notice it. It seemed as though he had made up his mind not to lose his temper. Nothing could rouse him. Even when the Matador entered and threw a dart which landed on what would have been a vital spot (had kills

been allowed), he remained unconcerned. At this the quartette got fed up and left.

"He can't play darts for toffee, and 'e couldn't kill a flea," said 'Erb, the foreman butcher.

"Rotten band they've got," said Jack the trombone player.

"Funny looking lot the Mussolini-ites," said Horace the photographer.

"Fancy 'em not Parley-Vooing!" said Bill, the army linguist.

GREEN

STRANGE to find it here in this busy London street with the traffic roaring past.

It was hidden behind a great ugly hoarding.

There had been a summer shower, and I smelt wild Thyme, and looking round discovered the little gate and slipped through.

What heavenly peace after the clattering traffic of the streets! And the garden, how beautiful, but how sad!

Overgrown and neglected it was, a tangled confusion of flowers and weeds. Here an old stone seat broken and crumbling, there a lily pond choked with dead leaves. A marble cupid fallen from his pedestal, lay on the ground, half hidden by grass and brambles. All was neglect, ruin and decay.

Presently a little old woman came slowly down the flagged pathway—wrinkled and bent she was, and walked with difficulty. I went towards her.

"And what might you be wanting?" she said in a thin quavering voice.

"I'm so sorry if I'm trespassing," I replied, "but the streets were so hot and your garden looked so cool, I ventured in. And I

didn't dream any one lived here. The house is falling. Surely it is unsafe?"

"It'll last my time, and the ivy holds it up," said the little old woman.

"It looks interesting," I said, "may I see it?"

"There's nothing to see," she said, "it's just a ruin."

And she led me up the pathway to her room on the ground floor. She was the caretaker she explained, and this room was the only habitable room in that enormous house, and even here the ivy had crept through a large hole in the masonry, and now covered the whole of one of the walls, against which the bed and a few pieces of furniture looked quaint and incongrous.

We talked, and the old lady made tea.

"How quiet it is here!" I remarked.

"Yes, it's quiet enough," said the old lady, "quiet enough to drive yer crazy. Not a soul to speak to save the cat, and her down the garden after the birds most of her time."

"Your husband?" I asked. I had noticed she wore a wedding ring.

"Out," she said, "out every minute of the day. Drink and company, that's all he lives for. Drink and company."

"I suppose it is lonely," I said.

"Lonely!"—she laughed shrilly. "It's lonely alright; wasn't so bad when my son was home, but he's married and gone to live at Penge. I never see him now. They've got a baby, but I've never seen it. I'd like to see it," she said wistfully.

She paused and looked towards the road.

"It's that there hoarding," she went on. "Before they put that up, I could watch the 'buses and the motors and the people going past, but now there's nothing."

As I walked down the flagged pathway on my way out, I thought with a shudder of the hot, noisy street. "It's so peaceful here, so green," I murmured, half to myself, but the old lady overheard me.

"That's it," she said in a queer frightened voice, "it's the green. You can see it, can't you?—Coming in through the roof, through the doors and windows, through the holes in the wall, through every crack and crevice. And I can't keep it out, it's covering everything." Here her voice sank to a whisper. "It'll cover me soon," she whimpered. "I hate it! I hate it! I hate *Green!*"

Her name was GREEN.

AN EAST END TRAGEDY—AVERTED

I WAS looking in a little box to-day, where father keeps
A lot of little funny bits, yer see,

And I found a bit of root, it looked like Spanish so I thought
I'd eat it, when me father shouts to me.

Do you know what you're doing? Hand it here, and lively too.
Do you know that's quinine root, I said oh,

Is it poison, will it kill me, I only bit it once,
It looked like Spanish, and I didn't know.

He said: "I'd cut yer fingers off for two pins."
Then me sister Gladys, oh, she is a cat,

Went and got two pins to see him do it.
Never mind, you bet I'll pay her out for that.

I said, " Is it poison, will it kill me ? "
I was crying, oh, it did give me a fright.

He said, " Kill yer, kill yer, it'll do far worse
than kill yer,
The bloomin' stuff'll give yer'n appetite.

APES AND LANDLADIES

ZING was an ape, a performing ape. He was very clever was Zing. He belonged to a pair of strolling musicians. They called themselves "Les Zingaras."

They made very bad music on guitars and mandolines. Zing was the star and Zing knew it. There was hardly a city in the world "Les Zingaras" and Zing had not played. And now they were back in England and it was spring, but so cold and work was so scarce. These were lean times for the show business.

So "Les Zingaras" took to busking, playing outside theatres and public houses, Zing doing his tricks in the streets, and he hated it. The traffic worried and frightened him. The street boys teased and laughed at him and this made Zing savage. "Les Zingaras" and Zing made a pitiful spectacle, for papa and mamma Zingara were at that age when a chimney corner seems the most desirable thing in the world. But chimney corners mean money. No! "Les Zingaras" must work if they must live.

And it was so with Zing. He, too, was tired —tired of his tricks, of the incessant travelling, the draughty theatres, the indifferent lodgings. Zing wanted a chimney corner. But no! Zing must work.

Now, through all their misfortunes papa and mamma Zingara remained sweet tempered and pleasant. Not so Zing. He grew irritable and quarrelsome, and one day he had actually bitten papa Zingara for the first time in his life. This was a great grief to the Zingaras.

As time went on, Zing grew worse. He would delight in frightening the children who would watch him entranced. He would snarl and would have bitten. Oh! Papa Zingara had to keep a sharp eye on him. Many a poor landlady had Zing scared nearly out of her wits by springing on to her back and hanging on to her apron strings. And when she shrieked, Zing would shriek too. It was all very sad.

Now it happened that "Les Zingaras" were booked to appear at a small theatre in a small town in Yorkshire. But when they arrived they could not get anybody to accommodate them with a room. Zing was the stumbling block.

"You won't mind our little pet monkey," they would say to the housewife who was on the point of letting them a room. "See, he is so small, so clean and so friendly." And they would open the basket that the housewife might peep at Zing. But Zing would snarl and try to bite. One glance at Zing's wicked little eyes and the housewife would go hastily in and close the door in their faces.

This day they had walked until they were footsore. They were just on the point of going to the manager to ask if he would allow them to sleep in the theatre, when they saw a house standing by itself at the end of the straggly street. They would have one last try said papa Zingara. They knocked, and the housewife, a big raw-boned woman came to the door and, oh! joy of joys, said yes. She had a bedroom. They could have the use of her front kitchen to eat and sit in. And she didn't mind the animal as long as it was clean.

How glad they were, how grateful, as they followed her into the house.

Firstly Zing. He must be taken out of his basket, and fed with warm milk. Pray heaven he had not taken cold. Then he was chained to the fender in front of the big range where a great fire burned. That done they fed them-

selves and went to the theatre to set up their " props " for the evening performance.

Zing sat on the rug by the fire. But although he was warm and fed he could not sleep. His nerves were on edge. He was angry at being bumped about in his basket for so many hours.

So he sat sulking, listening to the housewife humming in the back kitchen.

T'was then he began to hatch a plot, a wicked plot concerning the biting and mauling of the housewife. Having got it all fixed in his mind he sat waiting. She was bound to come in sooner or later, they always did.

The housewife was making bread, kneading it and letting it rise in the back kitchen, and then baking it in the big oven in the range before which Zing now sat waiting. Presently he heard her coming and crouched as she entered with a tray of loaves ready for the oven. But before Zing could spring, she had kicked him off the fender into the corner, popped her bread into the oven, closed the door and was gone again.

Zing sat there bewildered. He couldn't believe it. Kicked! and by a landlady! Zing couldn't get over it. In fact he never did get over it.

He died soon afterwards. It was consumption they said, and papa and mamma Zingara grieved terribly. But my own opinion is he was "fed up." He had lost that "joie-de-vie" and so passed to the happy hunting ground.

THE UGLY ONE

THE photographer's wife had been worrying him to photograph that dear old Mrs. Churchill whose sister was married to a " Sir," the nearest approach to title the photographer's wife knew.

Mrs. Churchill was a stout old lady just on eighty, with faded blue eyes, two or three chins, slightly deaf and almost bald.

" Such a nice woman, Jack," said the photographer's wife, " and she'll pay you well. They do say she's got money. Although she only lives in lodgings and dresses shabby, she's a lady."

So it was arranged that Mrs. Churchill should come that afternoon, and she came, accompanied by a crony, and two large cardboard hat boxes. They all had tea in the parlour, and then Mrs. Churchill climbed up to the garret, which the photographer had fitted up as a studio. They were followed by the photographer's wife and little boy, carrying the cardboard hat boxes.

" I haven't had my likeness taken since my sister Ellen married Sir Richard forty years ago," said Mrs. Churchill, after she had re-

gained her breath. "And I want these photographs so that I can send her one, and one to my son in Canada. So I do hope they'll be nice. I'm nearly eighty," she said proudly.

"Are you really?" said the photographer, "I should never have thought it."

"Yes," went on the old lady, "but I'm losing my hair, that's why I want to be taken in a hat. I couldn't make up my mind which one I looked nicest in, so I've brought them all along for you to see which you think will make the best picture."

So the hats were taken out and passed in review. First a pancake affair was tried on, then a shape resembling a man's Alpine hat was perched on top of the almost bald head, and each time the old lady turned to the photographer and smiled and simpered.

It was very tragic.

Then it seemed one of the hats was missing. The old lady was sure she had brought eight. They searched everywhere, and the photographer's wife and little boy were called up again to help, and the little boy found it. It was a whisp of lace and ribbon that had got caught in the trimming of one of the other hats. It was about the size of your hand. The old lady called it her cap.

Now it came to choosing. The photographer thought the cap would be the most becoming, but the old lady herself was rather partial to the Alpine shape. So it was decided to have a photograph taken in each. And they commenced.

"I'll have my cap, please," said the old lady to her friend. "Pin it on for me, will you?"

The friend took a couple of hair pins, and pinned it on. But what she pinned it to, was a mystery. The photographer's wife and little boy remained to see the performance.

The old lady was very quiet. The photographer posed her, and she stayed where she was put. Only once did she make a remark, and that was when the light came through the window rather strong. Then she said:

"Don't put me in the sun. It makes my face all red and blistery."

So the photographer found a parasol, which he gave to her, and posed her with.

"Fancy," she said, "a sun-shade! How nice!"

It was a ruse on the photographer's part, when he wanted to bring a happy expression to the faces of his lady clients, to say at the critical moment, "think of him." This was the cause of the first negative being spoiled.

The photographer had got the old lady set, and was just going to squeeze the bulb, when, from force of habit, he said, " think of him."

This remark sent his wife into fits of laughter, and caused the old lady to turn her head to see what the noise was about. And the plate was spoiled.

The next photograph was taken in silence, the photographer having admonished his wife for her hilarity. But, when the old lady donned the Alpine hat, the photographer's little boy couldn't stand it.

So the studio was cleared except for the old lady and the photographer. When it was all over, the old lady was most anxious to see the proofs. She was told to come in a couple of days. She came with her friend, as before. The photographer's wife and little boy did not go to the studio with them this time. They had seen the proofs of the portrait in the Alpine hat and were not to be trusted. So the old lady saw the proofs, and the photographer assured her the one in the cap was the best, in fact the best photograph he had ever taken. So like her. Beautiful he said it was. But no! The old lady preferred the one in the Alpine hat.

" It's so like my dear mother when she was

young," she said, "and the other makes me look so old."

She took the proofs to the window to get a better light on them. The photographer put the Alpine hat plate on a chair, while he took a spot out of the other one.

The old lady, with an astonished look, came across to him to show him the proofs had faded. He was explaining to her the reason, when she sat down, suddenly. There was a sound of cracking glass, and the Alpine hat negative was no more!

* * * * *

No she wouldn't sit again, she said. It was too much trouble. She would just have to have the ugly one.

* * * * *

"I remember doing a thing like that once before," she said to the photographer's wife, as they all sat in the parlour drinking tea. "We had a cat once. A lovely animal it was. 'Toots' we called it. We had it for years. It was always having kittens. I used to drown them as soon as they were born. But amongst

one lot she had, there was a little black one with a white tip to its tail—the prettiest little kitten you ever saw. I kept it, and an intelligent creature it was.

" Well, I'd been out shopping one day, and I came home dog tired, and my feet were that sore, that when I got home I didn't wait to take off my hat I just plonked myself down in our old rocking chair, took off my shoes, and closed my eyes for a few moments.

" When I opened them again I saw it was time to get the tea ready. As I was getting the milk from the pantry, I thought of the kitten. I put some down for him, and called him, but he didn't come. I thought it was funny, because he was always round my feet. Anyway, I didn't bother, and later our Jack came in. He went to sit down in the rocking chair, when he gave a shout.

" ' Here mother,' he said, ' What's this ? '

" And there was the poor little mite, as flat as a pancake. I'd sat on it.

" Yes," she said, as she and her friend were leaving, " I'm sorry about the nice photo, it looked so like my mother when she was young. The other makes me look so old. But I couldn't go to all that trouble again. I'll have to have the ugly one."

THE SNOB

It's sickening straight it is and every day it's just the same.
When I come 'ome from school my mother she
Says you needn't take yer 'at off, take these boots 'ome and be sharp,
Cos until yer get the money there's no tea.
Me father 'e's a snob, yer know, 'e mends boots father does,
'E says 'e's always on 'is uppers too.
But they never 'as no money nor no nothing doesn't snobs
I wish 'e 'adn't been a snob I do.

I wish me father could 'ave been a pleeceman.
I'd set 'im on a boy wots on to me,
Or else the driver of a 'lectric tramcar,
Then I could ride on it and not pay nothing, see.
A girl wots in our class at school she is a stuck up cat,
She's got the measles now and a good job.
She's always swanking just because 'er father is a postman.
You can't swank when your father is a snob.

There's the bloomin' schoolbell ringing, I'll
be late again you see
And to-morrow's our examination day.
I bet yer what yer like I fail again I always do,
And it's not my fault I don't care what yer say.
Oh! I do 'ate to stay at 'ome. I like our
school yer know,
They learn us French they do and Latin too.
A dandelion it aint a dandelion at all it aint,
It's a li-on-te-dong-ter-rax-e-cum, it's true.

And now we've started 'aving cooking classes,
We cook such lovely cakes and pies as well.
I like the cooking classes best of all things,
But I get so starving 'ungry with the smell.
I asked me mother yesterday why she don't
make us cakes.
She says she can't afford to with us mob,
Says she dunno 'ow it manages to run to bread
and dripping.
Look at me boots! You'll know me dad's a
snob.

Young Lily Smith, the ugly cat, that lives next
door to us,
Says she's going on the pictures when she's big.
If they 'ave 'er in a picture I shall never go and
see it

Cos 'er face is just the image of a pig.
'Er father is a shuvver, yes, 'e drives a motor car
And now she is as cockey as yer like.
Cos he ran into a girl to-day and 'it 'er in the boro
And after that 'e ran over a tyke.

I'm sick of running errands if I tell yer.
I'm sick of lots of things as well as that.
I'm sick of minding babies and I'm sick of washing pots up,
And I'm sick of Gladys Palmer too, the cat.
When I grow up a woman and get married if I do,
There's three things I won't do I bet a bob.
I'll never live in our street, and I'll never 'ave no children,
And I'll never 'ave a 'usband wots a snob.

BEEF-STEAK PUDDIN'

EDOUARD ET ETOILE were a little cockney dancing act. After years of hard work and patient waiting they were engaged for one of the big tours at double their usual salary. They were to open their tour in an important Midland City. They wrote for the best rooms in the town and, although the price was rather stiff, engaged them. No more combined rooms for them. They could afford a bedroom, and a sitting-room and a BATHROOM. They were the real thing now; not exactly top-liners, but——.

They got in on Sunday and went straight to the digs. Never in their wildest dreams had they imagined anything quite so magnificent. And to crown all, Jack Hylton had stayed there, Wilkie Bard had stayed there, and now they were staying there. Oh! they were getting on.

But there was a catch in it somewhere and the catch was "Ma." They couldn't understand "Ma" at all. She was so dignified, so condescending. They had never struck anything like her. They dared not call her "Ma." Mrs.

Trevellyn was her name and a Mrs. Trevellyn she was. You couldn't call her anything else. She was a lady, and not only that, she had seen better days. "If," she would say to her lodgers, "if my poor dear husband knew I had had to stoop so low as to take in professionals, he would turn in his grave."

Edouard et Etoile felt uncomfortable and embarrassed when in her presence.

On the Monday, after they had finished breakfast, Mrs. Trevellyn came into their sitting-room, wearing a starched print frock and apron, paper and pencil in her hand. She coughed discreetly and asked in a high pitched and affected voice. "What orders for luncheon please."

Edouard et Etoile were crushed. And so it went on all the week. By Friday Edouard was getting fed up. On Saturday morning in came Mrs. Trevellyn as usual.

"What for luncheon to-day," she asked.

"Well," said Edouard, "What do you say Lizzie?"

"What about a beef-steak puddin'?" answered Etoile.

"Ah!" murmured Edouard, smacking his lips, "a beef-steak puddin'!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Trevellyn making a

note of it. "A beef-steak pudding, and what about vegetables?"

"What about 'veg' Lizzie?" asked Edouard.

"Oh just some spuds and greens," said Etoile.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Trevellyn making another note. "Greens and potatoes. And how do you like your pudding made? Do you like a thin crust?"

"Oh! just betwixt and between. Just an ordinary beef-steak puddin'," said Edouard.

"What about flavouring? Do you care for herbs?" asked Mrs. Trevellyn.

"Oh! I dunno just an ordinary beef-steak puddin'," said Edouard.

Edouard was getting "ratty."

"Then," said Mrs. Trevellyn, "perhaps you'd like a little bouquet in it?"

"No! Missus!" thundered Edouard, rebelling at last. "We don't want no Boquets in it, nor no button-'oles. No flowers at all. Just a ordinary beef-steak puddin'."

CATS AND DOGS

Ivor was a ginger cat. He belonged to a dear old lady, whose pet and companion he was. Ivor had lived his allotted span for cats. Now old, nearly blind, and with the usual decrepencies attendant on old age, his devoted mistress resolved on a painless death for him.

She consulted her nephew. He said he knew a fellow who was a chemist's assistant, and he was sure that the chemist's assistant would do the job.

So the chemist's assistant was deputed to call on the dear old lady, who begged him with many tears and lamentations to " do what they did with the cats round there, and not to tell her the when or how of it." He was just to take Ivor when she wasn't looking and tell her when it was all over and three shillings would be his.

For quite a little time Ivor lived on in blissful ignorance of his impending fate, the chemist assistant having forgotten all about him.

One day the chemist's assistant met the dear old lady's nephew, and they decided they would " go to the dogs." But they had only

" half a dollar " between them. The entrance fee paid, that left nothing to bet with. So they thought and thought until they thought of Ivor.

" Come on," said the dear old lady's nephew, " we'll do Ivor in, get the three bob, and then we'll be set."

So off they went to the dear old lady's house. They hung about a bit and presently they spotted Ivor sitting on a neighbour's step washing his face. The dear old lady's nephew picked him up and off they went to the chemist's shop.

It was early closing day so the shop was shut. But the assistant had a key. Once inside, they put Ivor into a box and " turned on the chloroform." They gave him a big dose and made a good job of it. When all was over they buried him in the chemist's back yard.

Then they went to collect the three shillings.

They knocked at the dear old lady's door. She answered it. The chemist's assistant spoke.

" He's gone, madam. Quite painless it was. I hope someone will be as good to me when my time comes."

" Yes," said the dear old lady's nephew,

" he died quite peacefully Aunt Jane; looked just as though he was sleeping."

" But," said the dear old lady, " Ivor was here a minute ago. He came along the passage with me. Ivor! Ivor! Puss! Puss!" she called, turning from the door. And there on the stairs sat Ivor still washing his face.

" Oh!" said the chemist's assistant. " I'm so sorry madam. We must have taken the wrong cat."

" Ah!" said the dear old lady, " I'm so glad it wasn't Ivor."

" I didn't think ginger cats were so common," said the chemist's assistant as they walked away minus the three shillings.

" Never mind! Next week!" said the dear old lady's nephew.

" Next week!" echoed the chemist's assistant darkly.

FILTHY LUCRE

I'D go and drown me bloomin' self for two pins,
I'd run away, if I knew where to go,
Father's uncle, him abroad, has died an' left us all his money,
Why he didn't take it with him I dunno.
Now we don't live down Barker's Court no longer,
We're living in a place they call Park View.
We've got five rooms all on our own and there's only fourteen of us,
We lose our bloomin' selves in 'em we do.

I wish we'd never had the rotten money,
We're all as miserable as can be,
We don't know nobody, an' nobody knows us,
And no one wants to—far as I can see.
We don't get any fun, not like we used to,
Father's doing things he never did before,
Mother 'asn't had a black eye now for weeks and weeks and weeks,
And we were so happy when we were poor.

I always thought me mother's name was " push face,"
It's the only name I ever knew she had,
Now father calls 'er Elizabeth, ain't it a rotten name,
An' she calls 'im 'Erbert—'Erbert's just as bad.
If yer want to know somethink, we've got a slavey,
But yesterday I punched 'er on the nose.
She's going home on Saturday, a jolly good job too,
Still me mother'll get another I suppose.

I wish the bloomin' bank would bust or something,
An' let us be just like we used to be;
We mustn't fight ,we mustn't pinch, we mustn't swear, it's awful,
If anyone is sick of it, it's me.
The girls at Park View College, they all 'ate me,
Barker's Court girls they won't speak to me no more,
And now me mother says we've got to go to Sunday school,
And we were so happy when we were poor.

I want to go where we know all the people,
It's rotten straight where we're a'living now.
Ye never sees a fight unless the sparrers starts
a sparrin',
Then the neighbours all complain about the
row.
We're all respectable in Park View terrace,
Well, a parson lives at number twenty-two ;
We've all got 'andles on our doors, and blinds
up at the winders,
An' the copper comes down by 'imself 'e do.

Oh, I want to see Bill Johnson slosh his missus,
The way he used to every Sat'day night,
And throw his mother down the stairs, and
fling things at the copper
And see Ginger Bill and Hoppy have a fight.
Now I've got to comb me hair out every
morning,
And me face it ain't arf getting awful sore,
'Cause every time I get it dirty now, I've got to
wash it,
And we were so happy when we were poor.

THE FAITH-HEALER

EDWARD HITCHINGS was beloved of the Maoris. He had lived in this North Island town of New Zealand since before it was a town. His father had been one of the earliest pioneers, and had fought in the Maroi Wars.

"Edward Hitchings, Chemist," was now one of the busiest and largest pharmacies in the North Island, and—Edward Hitchings himself was beloved of the Maoris. He was their "medicine-man," their guide, philosopher, and friend. They came to him with all their ailments, and their troubles—domestic or otherwise. He cured, relieved, and advised them and they adored him in consequence.

"Hitchings the medicine-man," they called him affectionately.

Now Tagana was a Maori faith-healer. He was a cheery fellow, very cheery—with a roving disposition which all accorded with his position as the great faith-healer. But he had many followers. They had built a church, around which had sprung up a village, and they called the village Tagana after their leader.

It happened that Tagana himself had

occasion to visit Hitchings' pharmacy to buy some soap and a bottle of perfume for "the missus." There were several other people there when Tagana entered, so the "medicine-man" could not attend to him immediately. But Tagana did not like being, as he thought, ignored. So he called out: "good morning, Hitchings."

The "medicine-man" nodded to him, but went on serving. The faith-healer fidgeted and coughed and showed much impatience. Still the "medicine-man" went on, gradually disposing of his customers.

The faith-healer, used to the limelight, could not understand why no fuss was being made to attend to him. So he cast about for a reason, and then the thought struck him. Jealousy! Yes! That was it. The "medicine-man" was annoyed because he preached the "faith-cure." They were rivals. That was why he was being kept waiting. Jealous! Yes! That was it.

He must placate the "medicine-man."

So Tagana waited, and as the last customer left the pharmacy, he approached the counter.

"Good morning, Hitchings," he said again. "You know me, eh?"

"Your face is familiar," replied the

"medicine-man." "But I can't quite place you."

"Yes, Hitchings, you know me. Me Tagana, the faith-healer."

"Oh! So you are Tagana are you," said the "medicine-man," in a surprised voice.

"Yes! Me Tagana. And me and you good friends, Hitchings, eh? Me preach the faith-heal, but me still the good friend of chemist. Me no spoil the business. Me always preach. 'What the Lord can't cure, Hitchings the chemist can cure——'"

TUMAH

She was a little Japanese serving maid. Her name was Tumah Odaki, and she was employed at the Hotel at Kamakura. She spoke quite a little English, consequently she was much in demand with the English guests.

She was a little taller than the average Japanese, and her eyes were intelligent and thoughtful. Gentle and quiet she was, not always giggling, as were the other na sans. They were always slither, slither, slide, slide, up and down the corridor, giggling and laughing, or talking in squeaky whispers. I would come upon them in the morning after my early bathe, and it was pretty to see them, flitting around like so many dark-winged butterflies. But Tumah was different, and I grew very fond of the little serving maid.

In the evenings after dinner, the more musically inclined guests would repair to the lounge, where they would hold impromptu concerts, and others to billiards or bridge. If Tumah's tasks were done I would ask her to my room, and we would talk. She tried to teach me Japanese. I tried to teach her a little

more English than she already knew, and she learnt rapidly. Sometimes she would bring a friend with her, and we would push the table on one side and play ball. Tumah could do all sorts of tricks with a rubber ball. It was fascinating to watch her. But more often we would talk, and Tumah would tell me of her home and brothers and sisters. We always had a dictionary handy to help us when we got tangled up, which often happened.

Sometimes Tumah would walk down to the sea with me, and if the tide was out, round to Enoshima, where we would sit under the three pines, and watch the lightnings play behind the clouds—and it was here I told Tumah of my pathway.

I had been walking one day to the Diabustu and then as the day was young, I went on and came upon the pathway. I followed it that day and for many days after, but I could never come to the end. Tumah said it was better not to come to the end, perhaps the end would be unpleasant.

One evening I said to Tumah, "Come and help me to write about my pathway."

Tumah came, and this is what we wrote. We called it:—

CAPRICCIO

It was a whimsical pathway. I came upon it suddenly. It seemed to smile and beckon, and I followed. A capricious pathway it was; sometimes it walked modestly and sedately between hedges, sometimes it wandered off into the deep cool recesses of a wood, only to dance out again into the sunlight—sometimes, in wanton mood, it seemed suddenly to vanish, only to flash again into view, winding like a white ribbon round the foot of a hill. Once it slipped silently away into an avenue of trees, where the sun, filtering through the leaves, formed fantastic patterns at my feet. Oh, it was a very woman in capriciousness.

The big eye of the sun was wide open, a wind with flower-scented breath, and trembling with the murmur of a myriad cicidas, stirred ever so lightly the leaves over head; and from afar came the slow wistful murmur of the sea. A startled bird, darting from a copse near by, scattered some white blossom, which had been nodding drowsily in the great heat. Still my pathway danced along. The shadows lengthened, the day wore on, the air grew cool, and in the distance I could hear the chirp of the grasshoppers, and the cry of the peevish ones —the cicidas.

Two golden butterflies, like winged daffodils,

flitted incessantly in and about some odorous cream flowers; then my pathway wandered off into a litle pine wood. Still I followed until the sun began to nod, and the sky was all blues and purples—trailing away to the palest lilac, and the first star glowed like a great jewel in the heart of the sunset. I followed until the wind sprang up sighing and singing, and darkness settled over the sea, and all the hills were lost in shadow, and my pathway was swallowed up into the night.

"Tumah," I said, "what shall happen now the greedy night has swallowed my pathway?"

She thought for a minute, then—"come back to Tumah" she replied.

"Very well," I laughed, "and at the end we will put Sayonara. That means good-bye."

* * * * * *

I shall never know where my pathway ended, and I shall never see Tumah again in this world; for Kamakura was totally destroyed, and submerged in the last great earthquake.

WHAT'S THE USE OF TALKING

THERE's a fellow name of Douglas Smith I'm fond of.
He's in a butcher's shop in Pritchard Street.
I'm that sweet on him he sets me all a'tremble,
Whenever Missus sends me there for meat.
He's so handsome, lovely eyes and hair all wavy;
'Course he don't ever look at ugly me.
I try to get served last, let the other ones get past,
'Cause I like to watch and listen to him see.
And he's got such a comic way of talking,
I bust meself sometimes, the things he says.
I think he should go on the halls, or pictures;
He's just like Charlie Chaplin in his ways.
He spoke to me one day, he said "Good Morning,"
Which made me blush and leave me change behind.
If I wasn't such a sight, I often think he might
Just notice me, but there I aint his kind.

I wish I could be beautiful, I'd give the world I would,
To look as nice as some girls do and dress meself as good.
The lady in the cash-desk at his shop my word she's it,
Her face and hair is beautiful and her dress a lovely fit.
If I had the 'oof I think I might improve myself a bit,
But with a mug like mine—What's the use of talking?

It seems to me it's easy to be lovely,
If you can go by what the paper says.
They sell you the most beautiful complexions,
And fix you up nice in all kinds of ways.
Yer ugly turn-up noses they can alter,
And they're dabsters at the superfluous hair;
They kill the roots some way—at the rate of three a day,
With an electriloqueal affair.
I've a upper lip, wot gives me a lot of trouble,
Besides me other imperfections too;
When I read that you could get rid of hair so easy,
I nearly danced for joy—well wouldn't you?

So I enquired the place the paper told me,
They said—to kill each hair—would cost a quid;
And when I counted mine—a hundred and forty-nine,
On my TEN bob, a week, it can't be did.

I wish I could be beautiful—if only for a day,
I'd give most anything to make him look my way.
And to think it's want of money—oh it does make my heart ache,
And my complexion, oh the hours that does keep me awake.
Salts and senna, every night, I'm taking for his sake,
But I'm spotty still—so what's the use of talking?

Once a lovely actress in a paper,
Says, if yer hair is fallin' off or thin,
Just wash it with some ordinary boranium;
It's household stuff—you'll sure to have it in.
I searched the pantry through but couldn't find none,
So I ran round to the chemists after tea.

" Two pennyworth " I said, " of boranium for me 'ead,"
" Three and six a packet Miss " he says to me. . .
Another lovely actress—says she don't wash
Her face with soap and water any more.
She massages with cream when it gets dirty,
'Cause soap and water makes it rough and sore.
So when I'd done our kitchen flue last Friday,
I thought I'd massage mine with vaseline,
Then soda and soft soap and pummy stone was all the hope
After that I had of coming clean.

I wish I could be beautiful, it nearly breaks me heart,
To think it's just the money praps, that's keeping us apart.
If I was rich—a Quids worth of Boranium I'd buy ;
And Cleminite and Pheminol—the bloomin' lot I'd try.
Then when I looked like an actress I'd go an' get a pound of fry,
And p'r'aps he'd . . . Oh ! But what's the use of talking ?

THE RISING SUN

An old fashioned creeper clad hostlery is " The Rising Sun," and five counties may be viewed from the crest of the hill on which it stands.

Unfortunately it is within easy distance of London.

The house itself is an unlovely building, being a large low rambling affair ; but it has a wonderful flower garden, and the " Boss " does a roaring trade on high-days and holidays, in shilling bunches.

Sitting in the quiet parlour on a summer evening, the scents of the garden coming through the open door, listening to the droning voices of the village men (they have a quaint dialect here), its a place to laze and dream in ; but on fine summer Sundays, and bank-holidays its a place to avoid.

Then it is that motor cycles and side-cars are parked on the green in the front of the house, —" push bykes " lean heavily against the creeper-clad walls—the bar is full of noisy, thirsty men, and the garden is full of shrill-voiced women easily moved to laughter—flappers coy or flirtatious, according to the

mood of the maiden—children who swarm over chairs and tables, and many dogs.

Then it is that pots of old and mild, or mild and bitter, are brought out and quaffed beneath the trees, and cheese and bread and cakes are partaken of with zest and relish, and the "Boss" is sold out long before closing-time. With chatter, laughter, singing and dancing, you would hardly know "The Rising Sun" on fine summer Sundays and Bank-holidays.

On ordinary days the "Boss's" "Time Gentlemen please!" is a leisurely proceeding. He is not particular to ten minutes or so, especially if the sergeant happens to be in the bar; but on Bank-holidays it's different. The "Boss" and his buxom daughters are tired.

They have had a hard day, and are glad when the time comes to shut up shop, and a holiday crowd take a bit of shifting. So it's "Time ladies and gentlemen please!" a quarter of an hour before time.

At this the excitement grows, there are doch and dorises to be got—cycle lamps to be lit up—sweethearts to be sorted out—children to be rounded up—umbrellas to be found—dogs called to heel—and extra wraps put on, before they hit the trail that leads to the last 'bus home.

Then do the youths and maidens charleston

down the lanes to the tune of a mouth organ, and mother nags father and father swears at mother, as they push, carry, or drag the tired, peevish youngsters along.

Then the motors hoot, and the cycle bells ring—the dogs bark, and the babies wail, and the boys and girls make a horrible noise they call harmonising. It sends the night things into terrified hiding.

But gradually the noise dies away. At last it ceases altogether, and there is peace at " The Rising Sun."

Then the Lads Love and Stocks in the " Boss's " garden send out their sweetness on the cool night air.

The moon plays hide and seek with the shadows, and the tall pines behind the house sing to themselves; and " The Rising Sun " comes into its own.

GOSSIP AT THE RISING SUN

He was a grumpy old man, was old Wilson, the landlord of "The Rising Sun," and to-night he was worse than usual. It had rained all day and was still raining, and his screws were giving him jip, and he said it was all the fault of this damned weather.

"Well," said a genial fellow in the private bar, "there is one thing; it's good for the garden, makes things grow."

"Makes weeds grow!" returned old Wilson, "never saw so many weeds in all my life. It'll break my back getting them up!"

"Well," said the genial one, "while the weeds are growing, the other things are growing too, you silly old fathead."

The landlord looked hurt, and stalked out into the other bar, where the village police sergeant was holding forth.

"Yes," he was saying, "it was one night last Winter. I was sitting in the station, when the 'phone went. I answered it! It was one of our men, calling from a private house, and he told me they had found a dead baby under

the Lilacs—you know, the place where all them lilac trees are, about a couple of mile out t'other side of the village."

"Well I went down, and sure enough, there was a dead baby, under the lilac trees."

"I fetched a sack and puts the baby in it. It was a cold night, and I'd a goodish way to go; so as I was passing here, I thought I'd drop in and have a little drop of something to keep the cold out."

"So I comes in and orders my drink, you remember Mr. Coleet, and you were here, too, Mr. Lewis, if I recollect rightly; I was sitting in this very corner, with the sack between my knees, when some fellow I didn't know—I'd never seen him in the house before—says:

"'What's in the sack, gov'nor?'

"So, just by way of a joke, I said: 'Feel it, and if you can guess what it is, you can have it!'

"Well, that sack went the round of the bar; first one feels it then another. Then old Joe Baston opens it and looks in; but he didn't give the game away."

"'Ah!' says he, 'and very nice too, but nothing in my line!' and he hands the sack to little Joe Pincott."

"Well, you know what a nervous chap Joe is. He opens the sack, and his face turned the colour of that paper, and he made one dive thro' the door; I've never seen a man run so fast in all my life!" said the sergeant. "He ran and . . ."

At that moment, the door was flung violently open and in came Jack Sixsmith, the taxi driver, accompanied by rain and wind, so much so that he had great difficulty in closing the door.

"What kind of blinking weather do you call this?" he growled; the rain was trickling down his raincoat, making little puddles on the floor where he stood. He took off his coat, hung it across the back of a seat, called for a pint of Burton, took out his pipe and pulled up a chair, and joined the circle round the fire.

"Well, Jack, how goes it?" said Fred Lewis.

"Oh! putrid!" said the other. "Has Reg been in? I was to meet him here; we was going to the dogs, but look at the weather. I suppose he'll be in, in a minute or two."

"I've been right over t'other side of London with an old witch who I thought was good for a couple of bob tip. A journey like that, on a night like this!"

" I was on the rank outside the Ambassador Theatre, about five-thirty this evening, when the linkman comes running up."

" ' I've got a fare for you,' he says, ' you'll be alright with this one ; she's given me half a dollar.' "

" So I pulls up alongside and the old girl gets in and gives me an address in North London, somewhere."

" It was a long way, but I thought, by what the linkman had said, it would be alright. So off we goes and we gets along about a couple of mile when she taps on the window. I stops and opens the door."

" ' Taxi,' says she, ' haven't you got a light in your car ? '

" ' No, madam ! ' I says.

" ' Well, I can't find my keys. Can't you take one of your side lamps off for a moment ? ' she says.

" So I takes the lamp off and she empties her bag on to her lap, and finds the keys ; so on we goes again. At last, we gets to where she lives ; a big block of flats it was, and she makes me take the side lamp off again to see if she has dropped anything on the floor, and then she wouldn't be satisfied till I took the mat up and shook it. Then she says :

" ' Now, taxi, here is my key, open the door for me, will you ? ' "

" So I opens the door, and she was just getting out when she says : "

" ' Oh ! I had better pay you first, then I can go right in, and I shan't catch cold. How much is it ? ' and she takes a good squint at the clock."

" It was four and a tanner ; so after a lot of trouble she fishes out four and nine."

" ' What's this for, Madam ? ' I says."

" ' 'Er—that's threepence for yourself,' says she."

" ' Thank you very much indeed ! ' I says, ' are you sure the maid hasn't forgot to fill the hot water bottle ? 'Cos I'll come in and fill it with pleasure,' I says. Aw ! they give me the sick ! Here's luck ! "

" Same as this morning ; I was mooching round, trying to trap a job, when a ole tart hails me just by Marlowes Road. She wanted to go to the Post Office at the corner of Beauchamp Place in the Brompton Road. Well, I dunno how it was, but I was mixing Brompton Road up with Old Brompton Road, and I went to turn into Collingham Road when she pops her head out of the window. ' I want to go to Beauchamp

Place,' she says. 'Very good, Madam.' I says. And we didn't go three yards out of our way. But when we gets there, I sees the exact fare and tuppence over in her hand."

"'Fancy coming all that way round,' says she."

"'Yes, Madam,' I says. 'I've brought you all round London; the cab's dirty; the mat's dirty; and the oil comes thro' the back seat. It's alright, I've 'eard it all before. 'And over the tuppence."

At that moment Reg entered, more damp, if possible, than Jack.

"No dogs to-night, Jack," he says.

"No, I thought not," replied Jack. "What are you having? Shove that chair over."

When Reg had divested himself of his wet coat and was sitting in front of the fire, with a pipe in one hand and a pint in the other, Jack went on.

"——Like last night," he said. "I picked up four chaps at the Elephant. They wanted to go to Highbury."

"'How much will it cost, chum?' one of them says."

"'Well,' I says, 'It's a long way, and there's four of yer. It'll cost you about eight bob.'"

"'Eight bob!' he says, 'we can't pay no

eight bob, can we, chaps! Can't you do it for less?' "

" 'Well, I'll tell yer wot I'll do,' I says, 'I'll take yer a couple of bob a nob.' "

" 'Ah! Now that's reasonable,' they says, 'Rightho!' And off we went. Marvellous!"

" That's funny, why I was up the boro' last night," said Reg, " and I got a funny lot—a fat old girl and a little wizened man and a younger couple."

" The old girl did all the talking."

" 'I want you to drop my daughter and her husband at St. George's Church, and then take us to Hackney,' she says."

" So I did. And when we gets to where they lived, they gets out and the old girl asks how much it is on the clock."

" Six bob it was. So I tells her."

" 'Six bob!' she screams, 'Six bob! We ain't paying no six bob. We got a taxi driver in the family, and we know yer tricks, and anyway, we never pay cabmen at all here,' and she slams the door in my face. So I goes to look for a copper and, as luck would have it, one was coming down the street. So I says to him: 'Here, chum, there's a party here won't pay her cab fare.' He says, 'What number is it?' I says 'Number Sixteen.' 'Oh, 'Er,'

he says, 'come along.' So we goes back to the house and he knocks. She opens the door."

"'This man tells me you won't pay his fare,' says the copper.

"'He's brought us all round London,' says she."

"'Well, I shall have to take particulars,' says the copper—and pulls out his book."

"Mind yer, I'm standing at the bottom of the steps while the argument is on, and presently I hears a soft whistle from the airey, and the little wizened husband comes half way up."

"'How much is it?' he asks softly."

"'Six shillings,' I says."

"'Well, here's seven and six,' 'e says, 'go away—she always gets like this when she's had a couple.'"

THE WINNERS

It was a cold night. The tap-room of " The Rising Sun " looked cheery and inviting. There was a log fire blazing on the hearth, its flickering light reflected in the long rows of glass and pewter. There were roomy old-fashioned chairs and snowy deal tables, and the brick floor shone faintly red through the yellow sand sprinkled over it, whilst the soft light from a hanging lamp cast a warm glow over everything.

There are inns such as " The Rising Sun " to be met with even now, but they are few and far between.

The usual crowd of fellows were there—Bill Gilchrist, Fred Lewis, Alf Kitchen and little Jack Pincott. A game of darts was in progress and a lot of good-natured chaff and barracking was going on. This was usual whenever the crowd got together.

But to-night there was an odd, exciting atmosphere about the place.

" Smiler's late to-night," said Fred.

" No, he ain't ! He never gets down before nine," replied little Jack.

" But it's gone nine, ain't it ? " said Fred. " What's the time, Boss ? "

Old Wilson pulled out a silver watch the size of a saucer. " Just gone nine," he said.

" Nip down to the corner, Jack, and see if he's coming," said Fred.

Jack was out and back in a second or two. " He's 'ere now," he said, rolling a cigarette as he spoke.

Instantly the conversation died down. The dart playing stopped and all eyes turned towards the door.

Presently there was a cheery whistle outside and in came Smiler Smith. He nodded a general good evening, but looked self-conscious as he became aware of the many pairs of eyes watching him. For something wonderful had happened to Smiler. He had won the five thousand pounds prize in a football competition.

" Take 'em round, Boss," he said, " and your own too. This is on me."

" Going to spend it all at once, Smiler ? "

" What are you going to do with it Smiler ? "

" Going shooting in the South of France ? "

" Think of us poor toilers walking to work in the morning when you get yer Rolls Royce ! "

These were a few of the remarks with which the boys greeted him.

"Well, boys," said Smiler," I can do with it. I haven't done a 'ands stroke for fifteen months. And if the paper shop 'adn't let me 'ave the papers on the nod, I wouldn't 'ave it now."

"No! No jokes. What are you going to do wit it?" asked Alf.

"Get out of this country," answered Smiler. "Get out to where there's elbow room. The missus is dead keen on it and so am I. What chance do the kids stand 'ere?"

"Where do you think of going to?" asked little Jack.

"Well," replied Smiler, "we ain't quite made up our minds yet. South Africa I think. The missus has got an uncle in Rhodesia and we've written to 'im. Yes! I think it'll be Africa."

"Shame you're going to clear out," said Fred. "It don't seem right somehow."

"No!" said Smiler, "but what chance is there 'ere with all this unemployment? The old country's finished for the likes of us. It's finished."

"The country's alright if it was run right," said Bill Gillchrist, the village philosopher. "It's a crying sin and a shame that some have

so much and others so little. Now I've got a scheme that would pretty well wipe out unemployment in fifty years."

" 'Ullo ! Old Bill's at it again," said one of the boys.

" You'd do a lot with a big stick and a basket of eggs," laughed another.

" 'Ere ! Shut up ! Let's 'ear what Bill's got to say. 'Ow would yer do it Bill ? " said a third.

Bill emptied his glass, said " same again " to the landlord, knocked out his pipe and slowly lit again, speaking as he did so.

" Well," said he, " this is the way I figure it out. We're supposed to be a nation of sports. Well, we all like to 'ave our bob on, don't we ? Whether it's horses, dogs or football. Now the Government 'as legalised betting and it benefits by it, don't it ? Well, let the Government go a bit further and 'ave a national sweepstake for the workers. The workers what works, I mean."

" G'arn ! 'Ow could yer do it ? " said Fred.

" Easy as falling off a' ouse," replied Bill. " Now I'll tell yer. You've all got insurance cards, ain't yer ? They've all got different numbers on 'em, ain't they ? Well, every worker 'aving a number makes the drawing of

the sweep easy. At present every worker pays eightpence a week unemployment and eightpence a week 'ealth insurance. Well, there's near eleven million workers in this 'ere country I believe, and roughly a million unemployed. Now supposing the workers—the workers what work mind yer—paid the Government sixpence a week 'ealth insurance, sixpence a week unemployment, and sixpence a week for the sweep. That sixpence a week sweepstake means a quarter of a million pounds weekly which the Government would invest, say, at five per cent. That interest at five per cent would bring in twelve thousand five 'undred pounds weekly, the way I figure it out. Well now, each week there'd be a draw for fifty prizes: easy done, each worker 'aving a number on 'is insurance card, and the prize would be five thousand pounds each. This would be paid to them as a pension of five pounds a week for life. When the winner of a pension dies, if 'e's a married man the pension would be paid to 'is wife. At 'er death and at the death of an unmarried pensioner the five thousand pounds on which they 'ad been drawing interest would go back to swell the sweep. So the number of pensions per week would increase according to the number of

deaths per week. Of course every winner of a pension must jack up for good, and leave his job for some unemployed man. It would do away with old age pensions eventually, because every year two thousand six 'undred people would be made independent of work, and another two thousand six 'undred people would get jobs.

"Of course, nobody can't go in for this sweep unless they are working. This is for the workers what works."

"That don't seem fair, Bill. What about the chaps what can't get work?" put in Fred.

"Well, it would soon weed out the 'cant's from the wont's,'" went on Bill. "And don't forget there'd be a 'undred less unemployed on the lists every week. Why, it would eventually do away with 'ealth insurance, 'cause when people is 'appy and free from worry they ain't as likely to get ill. And not only that. Look 'ow the Government benefits. They've got the 'andling of a quarter of a million every week. Any way that's my scheme. And I presents it to the Government with my compliments."

"I 'ad a win on Bonnie Boy to-day. Won a quid I did. So drink up and 'ave one with me."

BABA

It was a village in Malaya on the fringe of the swamp and jungle of the Jurong River. Just a handful of palm-leaf huts, set in a grove of cocoa-nut trees.

Here lived a young Malay called Sallih, his wife Tafa, and the Baba. Four years old was the Baba—just beginning to lisp the soft Malayan tongue. He was strong and handsome, with straight brown limbs and soft intelligent eyes. He ran naked except for the bangles of bright metal, which covered his wrists and ankles, and many necklaces of coloured beads.

It happened one afternoon while Sallih and Tafa were working up at the big bungalow where lived the English Tuan, that the Baba, who had been left to play about the village, wandered away attracted by a small bird which had in flying, just brushed his face with its wings. Such a friendly bird thought the Baba, watching it as it flitted from bush to bush always a little in advance, playing hide-and-seek it seemed. On and on it flew, and the Baba followed, his dark eyes wide with pleasure and

surprise, his little form darting here and there like a brown butterfly, and his bangles all a jingle. So intent upon the bird was he that he did not notice the light change from a brilliant white to a soft pale green, and it was not until the bird vanished completely that he stopped and looked about him. He walked a little way and then paused again. There were so many trees. He hurried in another direction but grew more and more confused. Whichever way he went there were trees. So thick were they that the light could not pierce the tangle.

It was then the Baba noticed the darkness and the stillness, and, realising that he was lost, he ran blindly this way and that, shrieking with terror. Over dead tree trunks he stumbled. Roots tripped him. Long strangling creepers tried to hold him back, but he struggled on. At last he emerged on to a swampy clearing by the river where the undergrowth was sodden, and queer spotted flowers grew. Rotten wood and dead branches oozed out of the mud. Black logs lay around half hidden by a pulpy mass of leaves and slime. The Baba's eyes were swollen with weeping, his throat hot and parched, his limbs cut and bleeding. And, as he stumbled out of the darkness of the jungle

into the dim light of the swamp, he fell exhausted and slept where he lay.

Hours went by. Loathsome crawling things went over and about him. Still he slept. Presently there was a slight movement in the still green water. The pulpy mass heaved ever so slightly. Then a log stirred. Something was moving in the slime.

Then the horror showed itself. Stealthily and speedily on it came, until the whole of its huge bulk lay revealed in the dim green light. Straight up to the sleeping child it crawled, and in an instant the Baba was between its jaws. Then it crept slowly back and sank like a stone. There was a deathly silence over the swamp. Again the slime stirred and bubbled, and the thing re-appeared with the Baba, an inert and bleeding mass, hanging from its jaws. It dropped the little body on the mud just as Sallih emerged out of the gloom of the forest.

The Baba had been missed and Sallih with a score of villagers had set out to find him. They had been searching for hours in different directions.

Sallih sprang forward but a creeper caught his foot and he fell. He was up in an instant just as the thing and its victim vanished into the slime. Sallih saw the Baba but he also saw

a curious marking on the thing's snout. It was then he knew that it was what the English Tuan called the "Old Soldier," a large loathsome crocodile that had haunted the river for as long as Sallih could remember. Many a child, and even men and women, had it carried off from amongst the villagers. It had been hunted time and again by the "Tuans" and Malays, but it had been always too wily for them.

Sallih wept with despair. He cursed with impotent rage. He mouthed many oaths. He vowed vengeance. Then he went back, and, in a choking voice, told the English Tuan what he had seen.

That evening up at the big bungalow the Tuan was entertaining one or two guests from Singapore, and he had been telling them the story of the Baba and the crocodile. "And so," he concluded, "if you want a bit of excitement, come along with me to-morrow night. I am going to try and give Sallih his revenge."

So the next night they set out. There were two boats, each paddled by two Malays. In one of them the Tuan had had fixed the spotlight from his car. The Tuan, his friends, Sallih and the guns were in this boat. The rest of the little party followed in the other.

It was close on midnight when they started, a gorgeous tropical night, with skies like deep soft velvet, and a moon that dripped silver. But as they paddled up the river it became dark. High trees met overhead. On either side the river crept thief-like into the swampy jungle. All was silent except for the shrilling of insects. There was not a ripple or drip from the paddles, so skilfully did the Malays manipulate them.

As they neared the clearing, the Tuan switched on the spot-light. There was a shriek from one of the women in the second boat, as a great bird, startled by the sudden glare, flew screaming and chattering across the water. They continued up stream. Presently on went the light again. A shot rang out. The water ahead churned and boiled for a second or two, then all was quiet again. The boat nosed in and around the swamp, but there was nothing to be seen.

Now the river narrowed considerably and the trees grew denser. There was a curious luminous glow just ahead, and there were whispered speculations as to what it could be. A settlement perhaps where the Malays were celebrating a feast of some sort, as a tom-tom was heard echoing drowsily through the night.

But, when the boats drew near, they found the glow came from a huge tree which was covered with fire-flies, which glittered and twinkled in the darkness. The effect was extraordinarily beautiful.

It was in the small hours of the morning when there was a low muttering from the Malay boys as the spot-light was switched on and off again very quickly. They floated on a few yards in the darkness. When the light came on again, the Tuan was seen, *en* silhouette, to hand the rifle to Sallih and to point into the swamp. The excitement became intense. They waited. Suddenly there was a shattering shot—then another. A great black shape seemed to suddenly rear up in front of the Tuan's boat. The water seethed. Mud and slime flew in all directions. Miniature water-spouts rose up all round as the crocodile lashed and fought. Both boats were nearly swamped, and the Tuan's boat was in great danger of capsizing.

After a little while the crocodile's struggles grew weaker. Sallih stood waiting, a jagged spear in his hand. The boat crept nearer. Sallih leaned over, and with all his strength drove the spear into the reptile's side. That finished it. It lay now gasping and choking,

its blood reddening the green of the swamp, its great jaws slowly opening and closing.

It was then that Sallih saw the curious marking on its snout.

They bagged three more on the return journey, but Sallih had no more interest in the hunt. He sat in the boat gazing malevolently at the " Old Soldier " as he was towed along in their wake.

Two weeks afterwards Sallih arrived at the bungalow with four crocodiles—one very large one with a scar on its side and a curious marking on its snout. They were stuffed and varnished, with green glass eyes all complete. He asked to speak to the Tuan. The Tuan took him aside. Sallih took out of his sarong a tiny bangle. It was the Baba's.

There was a break in Sallih's voice as he said : " ' The Old Soldier,' Tuan. I find this in his belly."

SNOBURBIA CALLING!

"Not up to much by the look of the furniture," said Mrs. Snobbington-Smythe to her latest friend, Mrs. Swankerton-Browne, as they stood peeping through the casement window of Mr. Snobbington-Smythe's charming and compact "£75 down, 23s. a week six-roomed, tiled bathroom, gas, water, electric light, main-drainage, no road charges, no legal charges, freehold £650," house on the Noseyville Estate.

"And they've no piano, either," said Mrs. Swankerton-Browne.

Their remarks were called forth by the presence of a pantechnicon. The people next door at "Dreadnought Villa" were moving in, and the two women had been watching and criticising.

Now it was over. The last bucket and fender had been taken in and the van was moving off.

"Now we can have tea," said Mrs. Snobbington-Smythe, as she rang the bell. "Tea is a 'pannicker' for all ills. Don't you think so, Mrs. Swankerton-Browne?"

A small be-draggled little woman entered.

"Tea, Gladys," said Mrs. Snobbington-Smythe.

"Yes, Mum," murmured Gladys.

"Nice quiet girl that," said Mrs. Swankerton-Browne. "Has she been with you long?"

"Oh! yes! Gladys has been with us quite a time. Six weeks to be exact," replied Mrs. Snobbington-Smythe. "Egbert, my husband, thinks of agitating for an old-age pension for her. The poor thing's got an 'implement' in her speech too."

"Do you take sugar? No? I thought not. Now nothing makes me fat. Yes! Gladys used to be with Mrs. 'Chez-Nous' at 55, but she left there. She's never said so, poor thing, but I don't think she got enough to eat. She's much better off with us. Do you know, there isn't a day passes but what that girl *SITS* down to lunch, with the children and myself, and always gets almost as much as anyone. I've only one grumble. She will not address me correctly. It's always Mrs. Smith. As I said to her, 'Gladys,' I said, 'my name is a 'hyfincated' one. I wish you'd remember."

"Do you know the 'Ingle Nooks,' Mrs. Swankerton-Browne? No? Then don't. Mrs. 'Ingle Nook' called on me the day after

we moved in—I do hate people to call except on my receiving days—and wanted to borrow a basin. Later on she came for some custard powder. It was early-closing day and she couldn't get any. Then one evening she called and requested the loan of our hedge-clippers. Then Egbert, my husband—a most obliging even tempered man, even for a bank clerk—got annoyed, seriously annoyed. He had only just come home after closing the bank and putting up the shutters. Clipping the hedge is his hobby. He looked her straight in the face and said in a severe voice: 'I'm grieved to say our hedge-clippers are broken!' And I never saw a woman looked so 'nom-plussed.'"

"She's been trying ever since to get even with him."

"Because Egbert prefers to walk home from the bank, as he doesn't care to associate with the people one meets in trains, she said I wouldn't allow him the coppers for his fare."

"You'd hardly believe her 'vindictivinous.' Egbert planted some virginia creeper in the front garden, just by the side of the drive, and she straight away got a gardener to set a lot of things to cover her house. She said to me:

'won't it be nice Mrs. Snobberton-Smythe to have honey-suckle and clematis clinging over the windows every year?' I said: 'Yes! It will be a change from the brokers man climbing in at the window every month.'"

"Yes! That silver dish is pretty isn't it? I'm going to take it to the jewellers shop to have my 'entrails' put on it."

"How are the dear children?" said Mrs. Swankerton-Browne when she could get a word in.

"Oh! They're very well. But I'm rather worried about the school they are attending. It was recommended as being very select, but little Harold comes out with some very coarse expressions sometimes. I took him into the country the other day, to Greenford, to see my husband's mother. She sent him to the farm for some milk. When he came back he said: 'Oh! Mother! They let me see the milking machines working on the cows teats!' I was so embarassed. I said to him: 'Harold, when you wish to speak of that portion of the cow, you should say the cow's 'rudder.'"

"I didn't see you at church on Sunday."

"I was there," said Mrs. Swankerton-Browne.

"Oh! Were you? We arrived 'simtel-

aneously' with the dear Vicar. Wasn't the church full? Such a crowd."

"I thought the dear Vicar looked so pale. He's never been the same since the war. He was blown up you know, and got 'congression.' I don't think they know what's the matter with him. The doctor can't 'diagonise' his case."

"Did you see Mrs. 'Bella Vista' in that freak of a hat? Such a rude woman. I shall never demean myself to speak to her again."

"We always take a walk after service—two or three times up and down the main street—and Egbert had just stopped to purchase a packet of cigarettes—he doesn't care for cigars—and while I was waiting, that woman came up and said: 'are these your three darling little girls? What are their names?' I replied: 'Ethelberta, Etheldreda, and Ethelfleda. Old Saxon.' She said: 'What?' I said: 'Old Saxon!' She said: 'I asked for their names, I can see what they are wearing.' So rude!"

"This used to be such a nice neighbourhood, but it's gone down dreadfully since we came here. There's a common actor lives at 'The Limes,' and a low bookmaker-man lives

at 'The Oaks.' Where it'll end I'm sure I don't know."

"Going? So soon? Well, if you must—good-bye Mrs. Swankerton-Browne. So pleased you've been able to come. Wrap up. The air is quite chilly. Good-bye. Remember me to dear Mr. Swankerton-Browne. *Au revoir.*"

* * * * *

"Four sandwiches and two pieces of cake! She must have been saving up for this I should think," murmured Mrs. Snobbington-Smythe to herself, as she took up her position by the window again.

IF I DARED

Oh! this is a lovely book, twice I've read it through.
It's all about a girl called Joan, and there's nothing she can't do.
The angels used to talk to her, and for her country's sake,
She led the soldiers off to war, and they burnt her at the stake.
I'd love to do brave things like that, I would with all my heart,
To lead the soldiers off to war—ugh! but not the burning part.

I'd do a lot of things I would, if I dared—but I daren't.
I could do things, I know I could, if I dared—but I daren't.
I'd run away from here, I'm tired of fields and flowers too.
I'd bob me hair, not go to church, and I'd answer back Aunt Sue,
And I'd do most every blessed thing she told me not to do.
If I dared—but I daren't.

'ERE!

My brother's wife—he's married—she's a Londoner yer see,
They came to stay with us last Spring, I got quite fond of she.
Aunt Sue didn't like her though, she said she dressed too gay.
I thought she looked just lovely, I wish I could dress that way.
She'd got black beads all down her front. Eh! Sun did make 'em shine,
And her hair was cut just like a boy's. Eh! My! She did look fine.

I'd go to London Town right now, if I dared—but I daren't.
I'd never milk another cow, if I dared—but I daren't.
Aunt Sue says it's shocking that I carry on so bad,
And she's 'fraid I'm growing up to be a waster like my dad.
He ran away to foreign parts when he was quite a lad.
Oh! If I dared—but I daren't.

Young Mr. Smith, our parson's son, he's fond
of me I'm sure.
He stops and talks to me sometimes. If Aunt
Sue knew—oh! Lor!
To-day, when we came out of church, he
whispered in my ear,
Come for a walk in half-an-hour; you'll find
me waiting here.
Eh! I did feel shamed because me face went
burning red.
Says I, Aunt Sue won't let me come. Oh!
Don't heed her, he said.

I've never walked out Sunday night. If I
dared—but I daren't.
He's got grand eyes. I wish I might, if I dared
—but I daren't.
S'pose we did go for a walk, I know a way to
go,
Through Farmer Farrar's field into that little
wood below.
Then p'raps he'd put his arm round me, and
p'raps he'd kiss me. Oh!
If I dared—but I daren't.

TAXI TALK

JACK had just garaged his taxi and was in the kitchen having his tea, and telling his wife about the day's doings. They had been married five years. Moreover, she was a Yorkshire girl, so she didn't waste words.

" 'Ere's five bob to buy yerself something with, Emmie," he said, " I 'ad a couple of toffs to-day; Spaniards they was, they said. They 'ad flown to London by aeroplane and they said London looked so fine from the air, they thought they'd like to get a closer view of it. So they asked me to take 'em for a good long run round. I took 'em round the City, then I took 'em to Richmond, and then I took 'em—oh! all over the shop. Then, thinks I to meself, I'll take 'em to 'Arrer and let 'em see the view from the 'ill. So I does. When I got up to the top by the parish church, I opened the door and I says, ' gents if yer take a look over the church-yard there, you can see the Chilian 'Ills. And there ' I says ' is Windsor Castle. And there ' I says, pointing it out, ' is Jesus College.'

" And they was very interested. I drove 'em back to their hotel. It was thirty-nine and

threepence on the clock and they gives me forty-five bob. Toffs they was.

"Well, I went back to the rank; and yer know Tyler? 'E's 'ad a good eddication 'as Tyler. Been to the 'Polly' 'e 'as. So, while we was at Toni's 'aving a cup of coffee, I told 'im about the Spaniards, and 'e says what I told 'em was all wrong. It wasn't the Chilian 'Ills I showed 'em. They're in South America 'e says. It was the Chiltern 'Ills. And 'e says it wasn't Jesus College at 'Arrer. 'Is college is at Cambridge."

"Now I never knew that. Just shows yer what eddication does."

"Um!" grunted Emmie.

"Yes!" went on Jack, "and we've chucked Toni's. We're not going there any more."

"Why?" asked Emmie.

"'Cause they've started shoving it on." replied Jack. "It was all right before Mrs. Toni went to Italy for a couple of months' 'oliday. Since then it's been all wrong. I think she spent too much money there. And when she come back she was afraid to tell Toni. So when 'e went for 'is 'oliday—ten days at Southend 'im—she tried to make the money up. So she shoves on a 'apenny extra for bread, 'apenny extra for soup, 'apenny extra

for 'taters.' But to-day, she come it too thick. It was a 'apenny extra for Yorkshire puddin'. So twenty-two taxi-drivers packed up and went to Star's."

"Mind my clean kitchen with your dirty boots," said Emmie.

"Gimme the box and I'll clean 'em. Funny thing, talking about dirty boots. You remember that chap Ryder I told yer about—the chap that always 'as dirty boots? Well, I was round at 'is place yesterday and I says to 'is wife—'why don't yer make 'im clean 'is boots?' I says. 'A taxi driver's biggest asset is clean boots,' I says. ''E won't listen to me,' she says. 'Why don't you tell 'im?'

"So, when 'e come in I says, 'Ryder your boots do look awful. Don't you never clean 'em?'

"'Of course I cleans 'em,' 'e says. 'I cleans 'em every day afore I goes out. ''Ere 'Ilda,' he calls to 'is wife. 'Bring me that blacking box and I'll prove it to yer,' 'e says. So she brings the box and 'e takes out a tin of Cherry Blossom. And what do yer think? Spits in it, and starts blacking 'is boots. That shows yer."

"Um!" said Emmie.

Then he went on : " I was in a little pub this morning—round about dinner time, getting a bit of bread and cheese and a glass of beer, and I spots two old navvies in a corner 'aving their dinner. 'Ard cases they looked, both of 'em. Well, I was sitting there and who should come in but young Charlie Mitchell, and 'e says to the barmaid, ' 'Ullo Rosie ! I thought you'd gone for yer 'olidays.' ' No ! ' says she, ' I'm going Saturday.' ' Where are you going ? ' 'e asks. ' Ramsgate, I think,' replied the girl. I sees the old navvies cocking their ears. Then one of them says to 'is pal, ' Where are you going for your 'olidays Tom ? ' ' Rumania,' says Tom. I did laugh."

" What at ? " says Emmie.

" Can't yer see it, fathead ? " said her husband.

" See what ? Can't navvies go to Rumania if they wants ? "

" Yes ! Yer silly ! But 'e wasn't going there. 'E was ru-maining—'ere. Ha ! Ha ! "

" Silly kite, you ! Shut up ! There's the telephone. Hullo ! Hullo ! Yes ! He's here. What time do you want him ? Now at once. All right." Emmie hung up the receiver.

" You've to go quick to Chapel Gardens,

then to the nursing home. You know, that maternity case. Hurry up," said Emmie.

Jack went out.

" Bad as being married to a doctor," mused Emmie, as she turned on the wireless and started washing up.

CINDERS

Elsie Edgar was fourteen years old, of which fact she was very proud. Had she not left school? Was she not the eldest of nine and at this moment engaged in nursing the youngest who was seven weeks old?

She was seated on the steps of a tenement house, one burrow in the warren of which she called her home. Her younger brothers and sisters lay, sat, or stood around her, clamouring loudly for a tale, in which clamour the neighbour's children joined. For Elsie was a famous story-teller.

"Oh! So yer want a tale do yer?" said Elsie. "Garn I don't think!"

"'Ere!" (to an old enemy)—"'Ere, Doris Jones! Get orf our step! Go on. Shove orf to yer own menagerie before I start on yer! And as for you, Freda Evans, didn't I see you at the ice-cream barrer yesterday with 'ot chestnuts, and never so much as give me 'arf a blinkin' rotten one? And now yer wants a tale. Likely, ain't it? You go an' get yer tales at school where yer get yer manners.

Yes! And I know who's got peppermint rock under 'er overall this blessed minute. Think I ain't got no smeller, 'Ethie Reeder, do yer? No! And you ain't going to bite it orf for me. If I've got to tell you tales, I'm going to bite it orf for meself see."

"Well now—wait a minute and let me think. I know! I'll tell yer about Cindrella. Shut up all of yer and listen."

"Well,—Cindrella was a girl 'bout as big as me. Pretty she was, like me too, and she 'ad two ugly cats of sisters like I've got. And she 'ad a step-mother, 'er own mother being took orf with the dropsy. And the step-mother didn't like Cindrella; she liked the two ugly cats of sisters, being an ugly cat 'erself."

"So poor Cindrella had to wash up the pots and clean the 'ouse. 'Er father was always at the White 'Art 'aving one, and 'er mother was always 'aving another. So poor Cindrella 'ad an awful life of it."

"The ugly cats of sisters were jealous of 'er because she 'ad lovely long curls, like I'd 'ave if the baby wasn't always pulling it out. And they was always calling 'er Cinders, 'cause, like that Polly Flinders I told yer about, she was always sittin' in 'em."

"Don't pass rude remarks, Muriel Smith.

Of course they 'urt 'er, but the step-mother wouldn't let 'er sit on a chair."

"Well,—one day, there was a Lord Mayor's dance at the Town 'All, and the step-mother and the ugly cat sisters went—by underground—all swanked up with scarves over their 'eads, like you've seen the toffs at South Kensington. And poor Cinders was left to do all the work."

"So there she sat by the fire that wasn't because the coalman 'adn't been, and she got so frightened being all alone, and she kept 'earing funny noises, and presently the clock struck 'arf past ten. Then all at once she 'eard a yowl outside, and then she 'eard a tapping like mother 'eard afore Uncle Percy died. OOH! She did feel funny. She came over all shivery. Then she got up and opened the door and looked out."

"And who do yer think was there?"

"No! It wasn't old Mother 'Ubbard, sloppie. It was an old woman, with a stick in one 'and—"

"No! She didn't 'ave a bottle of beer in the other 'and, Betty Stevens, see. It was past closing time and they wouldn't 'ave served 'er anyway."

"She 'ad a white wrinkley face, and a long black cloak. And she 'opped straight into the

room, and said to Cindrella: 'I am your Fairy Grandmother. What would you like best in all the world?' "

" And Cindrella said: 'what I'd like best is to go to the dance at the Town 'All. But mother says I mustn't, and I ain't got any clothes anyway.' "

" Then the fairy ghost waved her stick, and Cinders changed to a beautiful lady, like what you see in 'Arrods Stores' winders, with a veil on 'er 'ead and flowers on 'er chest. And 'er face went clean without washing it."

" Then Cinders said: 'I can't go down the King's Road like this. The girls won't arf sling orf at me.' "

" Get a punkin and a mouse trap,' said the grandmother's ghost."

" So Cindrella got 'em and the ghosty fairy waved 'er stick again, and the pumpkin turned into a lovely carriage, like the one we 'ad when young Alfie died. There was four mice in the mouse trap,—they 'ad a lot of mice in the dwellings,—and they turned into four 'orses, with long tails like funeral 'orses. Then the fairy grandmother said: ''op in the carriage and go to the dance, but be back 'ome by twelve o'clock or I'll 'ave the clothes orf yer back, me lady!' "

" So Cindrella went to the dance, and the prince was there, and 'e danced with Cinders. They 'ad their photos took for the daily papers, and the prince treated 'er to a small port, and they got that friendly they could 'ave stopped there all night. Then, just as the prince was telling Cinders what a nice girl she was, the clock started to strike twelve. Cindrella jumped up, drunk up 'er port, and ran right through the big room where all the people was dancing. She ran so fast that one of 'er shoes came orf. The prince ran after 'er but 'e couldn't catch 'er. So 'e picked up 'er shoe and went back to the bar; and 'e felt so mad that he got one over the eight, and couldn't dance any more."

" When Cinders got 'ome she was all dressed in 'er old clothes, and she didn't 'arf cop out because the supper wasn't ready."

" Next day it was in all the papers that the prince would marry the girl what could get the shoe on."

" And just as the step-mother was giving Cindrella a 'iding for smashing a cup, who should come running in but the prince, and Mr. Baldwin, and the school-board man. And the ugly cats of sisters tried on the shoe, but it wouldn't go on their little toes. But, when

Cinders tried it on, it fitted lovely. So the prince said, 'Will yer 'ave me for your 'usband?' And Cindrella said, 'Will a swim duck?'"

"Then the prince gave Cinders a kiss, and Mr. Baldwin gave 'er a promise, and the school-board man said 'er children don't never 'ave to go to school. Then Cindrella told the newspaper man that the prince wasn't a bit like a prince and 'e danced lovely. And then they 'ad some more photos took,—for the Sunday papers this time."

"Next day they got married, and went to Southend for their 'oneymoon."

"And when they came back, they lived 'appy ever after."

* * * * *

It was as well the story ended here, because, at that moment Elsie's mother was heard shouting: "I'll Cindrella you, Elsie Edgar. Come in this minute, all of yer, or I'll cut the legs from under yer. That child wants 'is food, and the fire's gone out, and yer father's tea's not ready, and you've got to . . ."

Some of these monologues are published with pianoforte setting by Messrs Reynolds & Co., Berners St., London.

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